Week ending August 2 1958 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

Holiday Book Extract

BEYOND THE REEFS

Skin-diving for riches in the exotic lagoons of the Indian Ocean . . . the exciting adventures of William Travis

THREE COMPLETE STORIES

The Girl who Stopped a War
Terror in the Sun
Man Alone

WANTED: A SQUARE DEAL FOR MOTORISTS

MID-DAY, and the sun blazes; no breeze stirs the leaves. An old man makes his way slowly towards the inn, and the cart-horse dozes.

It might be anywhere in Dorset. But the inn is the Pure Drop Inn; and though the village is Marnhull on the map, Thomas Hardy called it Marlott—birthplace of Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

The perfect companions for seeing Britain are the new National Benzole road maps and "Our National Heritage" travel book.

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FREE SPEECH

Did Obidine Suffer Because He Was Coloured?

Fred Sullivan tells in his first article ("Emergency Call To Danger," July 12) how Benedict Obidine, a Nigerian, went berserk in his room in Paddington. But I fail to see why the law appears to have given Obidine different treatment from that accorded to other unfortunates mentioned in the article.

Obidine's obsession, says Sullivan, stemmed from feeling inferior because he was coloured. Yet he was sentenced to fourteen years. Sullivan tells us about white people who did similar things and were given hospital treatment which has cured them. A pity Obidine is black; he might otherwise be leading a normal life.

D. A. R., BRACKNELL, BERKS.

The medical evidence given in court was that Obidine was not insane, and the jury, by their verdict, agreed.

★ ★ ★

Bus Stop

I've always been impressed by the friendliness of the bus crews on the roads in the glens near Inverness—but the driver on my last trip beat them all. For no apparent reason he stopped at a house and tooted his horn. Then a woman came to the door and he called: "Your cow is in the corn in the next field." His message delivered, we drove on.

D. REID, VICTORIA ROAD, DUNOON.

. . . Recently we were having a very heavy refrigerator delivered to our home, three of us struggling to unload it from a lorry, when the village bus drove up. "Give us a hand!" I called in fun to the driver.

To our surprise he jumped down and did, helping to carry the refrigerator right into the kitchen—and the passengers didn't seem to mind the wait. How much better if city crews—and passengers—were as cheerful and helpful!

S. F. BURNISTON, AUSTWICK, SETTLE, YORKSHIRE.

★ ★ ★

Happy—Or Hopeful?

The quotation of Samuel Johnson's, saying that by marrying a second time a man pays his first wife a high compliment because it shows that she made him happy ("Compliments," July 12), recalls another of the doctor's remarks to Boswell.

He said of one man's second marriage: "It was the triumph of hope over experience."

A. E. CARPENTER, CHURCH GARDENS, DORKING.

★ ★ ★

Those Men Again

The man who wrote the scathing letter about the dangerous clothing worn by women ("Free Speech," July 5) must surely have forgotten that these foolish fashions are designed by men.

ANNE LEE SOUTHWELL, NOTTS.

★ ★ ★

Mixed Marriage

Is it usual for a blackbird and a thrush to mate? We have such a couple in our garden, with their nest in the upstairs room of my husband's workshop. The mother, the thrush, seems to be quite

Continued on page 4

P.K.

On summer outings,

chewing delicious P.K.

helps to keep your mouth

and throat cool and fresh.

Good to Chew and Good for You!

E184/8

FREE SPEECH

continued from page 3

unperturbed by human beings. Recently she flew straight past my husband on the stairway and settled happily on the three eggs she has in her nest.

MRS. JEAN COOPER, WHEAT HILL ROAD, HUYTON, LIVERPOOL.

"They can mate," says an ornithologist, "but the hybrid offspring are infertile; you never get a third generation. I haven't known it happen in the open, only in captivity. In some cases where this kind of mating has been reported, the 'thrush' has been found to be a female blackbird —they look very similar."

Thunder Fear

I'm terrified of thunder. I can face mice, spiders, even fierce bulls—but at the first rumble of thunder I begin to tremble. My heart thumps like a sledgehammer, and I dive into our darkest cupboard and sit with my hands over my ears.

My husband says that I'm more likely to die of heart failure than by thunder or lightning. *Can* thunder harm you? I do think that if I knew what it was I would be less scared.

MRS. L. BAILEY, WITHAM ROAD, LONG BENNINGTON, NEWARK.

Thunder itself is harmless. It is the sound of the atmosphere being ripped by lightning, as trillions of electrons crash into each other.

"One theory about the fear is that it is a primeval reaction, dating back to man's early history," says a psychologist. "But its root is more likely in the sufferer's infancy, perhaps by someone communicating his or her own panic to a child. A psychologist can help in conquering this fear but it must be tackled before middle age."

Innocent?

Of course we renounce sin at Confirmation ("Free Speech," July 12). But surely Mrs. McMullen has got her vows all mixed up.

If after Confirmation you know you have sinned you do not apply for another Confirmation service and blessing; you try, by prayer, to obtain forgiveness from God. But a divorced person who applies to be remarried is seeking the clergyman's complicity in ignoring the previous vows.

Incidentally, the so-called "innocent" party in a divorce is, to quote a bishop, the principal transgressor, "having been solely responsible for ending the state of matrimony by applying for divorce."

H. F., BATTERSEA, LONDON.

Not So Definite

Barry Perowne refers to "the Albany" in his story "Raffles and the Banned House" (JOHN BULL, June 21). The "modish cloister" known as Albany is *never* prefaced by the definite article—it should be just "Albany."

MRS. YSEULT MULHOLLAND, CANFIELD GARDENS, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON.

The original name was Albany, and this is now generally considered correct. But at the time of Raffles (the turn of the century) it was almost invariably called "The Albany"—hence its use in the story.

Bone Idle

I never see dogs bury bones these days. When I was a child they seemed to be for ever "caching

away calcium" for a rainy day. Are they losing the instinct in this welfare state atmosphere?

Or do I happen to live among a breed of extravagant dogs? Surely not—not in Aberdeen!

E. HENDRIE, MASTRICK, ABERDEEN.

"It's quite likely that fewer bones are buried," says an animal pathologist. "Dogs get a far more balanced diet now and don't have to worry about their next meal.

"But protection from rivals is only part of a dog's motive in burying bones. It also improves the flavour—they like them high."

Doorstep Secrets

I used to be able to "date" a bottle of milk by looking at the letter impressed on the foil cap, but recently these letters have been replaced by all kinds of odd markings—triangles, circles, squares.

What possible advantage is this? If I happen to confuse yesterday's bottle with today's I can no longer tell which milk is the fresher.

B. G. WESBY, WELSFORD ROAD, NORWICH.

"Each retailer has his own signs," says the National Dairymen's Association. "They aren't put on for the housewife's benefit, and if they do 'date' the milk it is incidental. The main purpose is to identify the bottling line in case of complaints."

Gee-up Parents

Before condemning mothers for letting four-year-olds ride in prams ("Free Speech," July 5) your reader should remember that some children tire quicker than others.

Here at the seaside I see lots of tiny children dragged along by parents, and given stinging slaps for not keeping up. Wouldn't they be better in prams? I know a children's doctor who set a good example. All his four children were wheeled in pushchairs until they went to school.

MRS. J. W. BIRD, WESTCLIFF PARK DRIVE, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA.

"There are far too many mothers who force children to walk," says a doctor. "A child should walk as far as it wants and no farther."

Well In Focus

What curious people we are! Recently I photographed a dimly lit alley at night. During the two minutes' exposure I was interrupted by a man who wanted to know *what* I was taking, and two policemen who wanted to know *why* I was taking it. And when I turned round, my glance at the other side of the road, hitherto deserted, was met by the silent, fascinated gaze of forty others.

R. JOHNSON, WINCHMORE HILL, LONDON.

JOHN BULL pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the JOHN BULL Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

SPARE a thought now for those who scorned the alluring travel brochures and confined their 1958 holidays to day trips. Well, inevitably Mother insisted on a "day off," leaving Father with the children, who, also inevitably, discovered all the fun of the fair within a day's march. Very soon, footsore Father was in no condition to see anything funny in that beaming balloon. "He lost a lot on the swings, and more on the roundabouts," comments Coleman. "I reckon he's already thinking of next year's holiday bookings."

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Generals gasped and Whitehall wondered when Polly Francis became . . .

The girl who stopped a war

by LIONEL DAVIDSON

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

EVERY weekday morning, at ten thirty exactly, Major Henry Chandler lit his pipe, took a folded copy of *The Times* out of his drawer, and began working on the crossword. It was sacrosanct, this half-hour between ten thirty and eleven. The camp was well run. He had given strict orders not to be disturbed. He never was disturbed.

He was greatly surprised, therefore, when, at a few minutes after half past ten on a fine day in May, there was a tap on his door and his adjutant came in. This was Captain Richard Bitters; a sound enough young chap, the major would have thought, and one who knew his little ways.

"What is it, Dickie?" he said irritably.

"Sorry to disturb you, sir," the captain said. "I thought you'd like to know O'Keefe has turned up."

"O'Keefe?"

"The fellow who hit Sergeant Dennison and ran off a fortnight ago. National Service chap."

"Ah, picked him up, have they? Good show," said the major, no dampener of zeal, but at a loss to see why he should be disturbed.

"He wasn't picked up. He gave himself up at the guardroom half an hour ago."

"Ah, well," the major said, rustling his paper crisply. "I shall be seeing him presently, then."

The interview was plainly at an end, but Captain Bitters still teetered slightly on

Polly said: "Harry—Mr. O'Keefe—knew it was his duty to come and tell you about this terrible plot"

O'Keefe was scared. For £500 he had promised to shoot a

his feet. He said at last, with some embarrassment: "To tell you the truth, sir, he's got the damnedest story I ever heard in my life. I wondered if you could spare a minute to see him now."

"Now?" The major gazed at him in consternation.

"He says he was hired to kill a man. There appears to be some urgency, sir."

The major stared at him for a moment longer and then put the paper back in his drawer. "All right," he said. "March him in."

"The only thing is, sir—there's a girl with him. She's slightly more convincing than he is. I wondered if you wouldn't mind—that is, it might be less trouble all round if you'd step over to the guardroom. This girl actually brought him back," Bitters added earnestly, as though throwing extra light on the situation.

The major did not like any of this. He did not like being interrupted, or leaving his crossword uncompleted, or stepping out of his office to interview an absconding private soldier. Above all, he did not like girls in the guardroom. Some premonitory nerve vibrated in his body; complications and irritations lay ahead today. He stood up and reached for his cap.

PRIVATE O'KEEFE, in flannels and sports jacket, sat upright on a small guardroom chair. He was a large, raw young man with hot, angry eyes. His face, the major thought, looked dangerous and incomplete.

The girl, in contrast, was the most delicate and *finished* little thing the major had ever seen. He looked at her twice quite sharply. Her black hair was cut short; it sat beautifully and elegantly above her rather stunning little face. She was wearing a yellow dress that suited her wonderfully.

Major Chandler was a bachelor and it had long been a preoccupation of his to wonder why all the really remarkable looking girls went for fellows with faces like O'Keefe. He felt himself becoming annoyed and aggrieved, and he said gruffly: "Now then, O'Keefe, what's all this?"

It was indeed, as Captain Bitters had said, a queer story. It seemed that after O'Keefe had hit the sergeant, outside a public house, he had made his way briskly to the station and taken the next train to London.

He had done this while not exactly sober, but once he was in London he realized he had burned his boats. He stood to pick up, at the very least, ninety days, and the prospect didn't attract him. He had eight pounds on him, and he dared not go home, for the military police would be looking for him.

He knocked about in pubs and cafés for a few days wondering what he should do, and then by chance he met a man called "Spider" Webb, who had deserted from the unit over four months previously. As it happened, both men were painters and decorators in civilian life and O'Keefe asked if Webb could get him a job.

The man Webb was very ill at ease and he blurted out that he had himself just taken a job he didn't want. He had got it through the proprietor of a café behind King's Cross Station, and he had only taken it on to oblige the fellow, who had helped him before. There would be a good commission for the proprietor.

"What is it?" O'Keefe asked.

"Well," Webb said, "it's a bit flipping queer. They want a bloke used to working from a painter's cradle on high buildings." That was about all Webb knew, except that the man had to be able to "take care of himself"—and that the pay was £500 for one week's work.

"Five hundred nicker!" O'Keefe said. "What's the catch?"

Webb didn't know that. He was supposed to get details that afternoon from a man he had to meet at a certain spot in Battersea Park. He plainly did not want to go, and O'Keefe, who was by now in desperate straits and beginning to think of himself as something of a desperado, said he would take on the job himself.

Webb was greatly relieved and gave him full directions. "There's only one thing, though," he said. "These fellows don't like being messed around. They were told I was going to do it, so you'd better make out you're me."

So O'Keefe went to Battersea Park and introduced himself as Webb to the man he had to meet. This was an elderly, well-spoken fellow, who questioned him closely about his work and his army life and then, to O'Keefe's surprise, asked him to accompany him to the funfair. There, in a shooting booth, he watched with satisfaction as O'Keefe fired off fifty rounds. O'Keefe was a very good natural shot.

They then went to a house in the Fulham Road where, in the back yard, a painter's cradle was suspended from the roof. The man told O'Keefe to raise himself in it to the second floor and descend again in the shortest possible time. He timed O'Keefe on a stopwatch and apparently the result was satisfactory for he pulled out his wallet and gave O'Keefe £10.

"Now then," he said, "I understand you are an absentee from the army. You have nothing to fear from us. The job you have to do is a simple one and well within your capabilities. You have to go up in a cradle and shoot a man through a window. He is an enemy of your country, so you need have no scruples. In wartime you wouldn't think twice about it. Come round here again tomorrow morning."

O'Keefe didn't know quite what to make of this. He had no intention of shooting anyone through a window, but the money was a godsend and, if he played his cards properly, there seemed to be a chance of getting a great deal more of it. He thought the old man was mad.

He went back the next day and was introduced to a "partner," another deserter, he supposed. This man was to drive a van for the getaway. Later three other men arrived and O'Keefe was told where the shooting was to take place.

This was when he began to get frightened. The place of the shooting was to be the Ministry of Defence.

One of the men produced two photographs from a briefcase. One was of the Ministry overlooking St. James's Park; a window on the third floor was marked with a cross. The other was of the man O'Keefe had to shoot. It was a large, glossy press photograph, and there was something familiar about the face, although he could not identify it.

The job had to be done at 3.35 p.m. precisely on the following Monday.

At this point in O'Keefe's story, Major Chandler asked: "Which Monday is that?"

"That would be today, sir."

Major Chandler looked at his watch. It was a quarter to eleven. "Carry on," he said.

All this happened on the Friday, and O'Keefe had grown seriously alarmed. He no longer thought the old man was mad. He realized he was dealing with extremely dangerous people. He thought he had better try and get more money while he could, and asked for it. The old man refused.

"You won't be spending much for the time being," the old man said. "You'll be reporting here on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. And, as a precaution for all of us," he added, smiling, "I think we'd better have your lodgings watched. We certainly don't want anything to happen to you."

O'Keefe left the house that evening in something of a panic. He didn't know what he could do. He had no wish to go to the police; he could hardly bear to think what they would say to this cock-and-bull story. Besides, no crime had yet been committed. And he thought of himself as a deserter. He was scared out of his wits.

He decided to cut loose; and the only place of safety he could think of was his girl friend's home at Walthamstow. The girl's name was Polly Francis.

"He hadn't got in touch with me before because he was ashamed of himself," Miss Polly Francis now intervened.

The girl's family were extremely alarmed at this apparition, and even more alarmed when they heard his story. Polly's father wanted to call the police at once, but O'Keefe said he would go if they did.

He stayed there Saturday and Sunday. By Sunday night the girl had persuaded him to give himself up. He still refused to go to the police, but he thought his own officers might listen to him, if the girl came to back him up. They had caught a train at seven o'clock that morning.

"Um," Major Chandler said in the silence that followed. He looked at Captain Bitters, and then out of the guardroom window to the P.T. class on the parade ground. "This man you had to—to shoot," he said, turning to O'Keefe. "You say you couldn't recognize him?"

"No, sir."

"Know him again, though."

"Yes, sir."

"Can you remember anything about him? Was he young, old? Civilian?"

O'Keefe's forehead creased. "Hard to say," he said.

"Very helpful," the major said, shortly. He couldn't see quite what he was to do about this. A telephone call could verify if some mysterious V.I.P. were in fact expected at the Ministry of Defence that day—but how exactly was he to phrase his extraordinary query?

THE major gazed sourly at O'Keefe as these thoughts went through his mind. He had a horror of making a fool of himself. All the same, there was an odd ring of truth in the fellow's stumbling story. And it was almost certainly beyond O'Keefe's powers to have invented it. He wasn't so sure about the girl.

"Harry—Mr. O'Keefe—knew it was his duty to come and tell you about this terrible plot," this Polly Francis now said, rather righteously.

"Did he?" said the major.

"And I was certain you would take it into account when you thought over his little bit of bother."

"Indeed!" the major said. "And did you also consider what I should do about it?"

"Oh, I knew we could leave that to you," the girl said confidently. "Besides, I expect the whole plan will be changed now that Harry has run away."

"H'm," Major Chandler said. The whole thing now seemed to him an obviously put-up job to get Harry off a charge. The girl was not so very bright after all. He had an urge to demonstrate this to her by calling her bluff. And, saying brusquely to his adjutant: "Keep him under close arrest," he stalked out of the guardroom. "Get me Major Higginbotham, War Office," he said into the telephone in his own room, and drummed his fingers on the desk until the call came through.

"Higginbotham? Henry Chandler here. A rather odd tale has come my way. I can't go into it fully on the telephone, but I wonder if

man—but who would believe his cock-and-bull story?

you could possibly whistle through to Intelligence to find out if some frightfully mysterious foreign V.I.P. is expected at the Ministry of Defence at half past three this afternoon. . . . Thanks very much."

While he was waiting, Captain Bitters entered the room, somewhat sheepishly.

"Sorry to have bothered you with all that, sir. It sounded a bit better the first time."

"That's all right, Dickie. I've got a call in to the War Office. We'll soon know if Harry, Mr. O'Keefe, is having us on."

When the telephone rang, however, it was not the major's friend Higginbotham on the end of the line, but a very senior officer indeed. The major had little chance to speak and, when the harsh voice in his ear ceased, he replaced the receiver very slowly and carefully as if it might break. His face was white and his hands were shaking.

"They're sending a helicopter," he said. "It will be landing on the parade ground in thirty minutes. O'Keefe, the girl, yourself and me—everyone that's heard about it—we're all going to the War Office."

"Cripes!" said Captain Bitters. "Then it's true."

At the War Office they were shown into a large, airy room where a full general and two civilians awaited them. Major Chandler had missed his lunch and he was feeling a little sick after the flight. He was feeling sicker still though at something he had not had a chance to mention over the telephone, and he said now to the general: "There's something I ought to tell you right away, sir. I wasn't able to tell you on the telephone, but there's a plan to assassinate this—this visitor at three thirty this afternoon. It's past two o'clock now, and even though the plan may have been——"

"What the hell are you talking about, Major?" the general barked at him.

"This—this Mr. X!" Chandler said with a kind of weak ferocity. "O'Keefe here is supposed to shoot him at half past three." He wondered if it sounded quite as crazy to them as it did to him. He quickly supplied the relevant details. One of the civilians blew his nose hard and wandered out of the room.

"All right," the general said. "Let's have the whole story."

Half-way through the story, which O'Keefe rendered yet again with the girl's assistance, the nose-blower returned and stood quietly in a corner looking over the notes the other civilian had taken. When O'Keefe had finished, the general looked across to this man, who said in a rather gay, interested voice: "This house in Fulham—did you get the impression any of them lived there?"

"I dunno, sir," O'Keefe said. He had masked his awe by working himself into a state of dull fury.

"Any beds upstairs?"

"I never went upstairs."

"Now, buck up, man," the general said. "You can see what we're getting at. It won't go any easier with you for being obstinate. Is that where we'd find 'em?"

"Now, how would he know that?" the girl suddenly burst out. Major Chandler, who sat next to her, had noticed her growing somewhat red during this interrogation, and he watched with admiration as she stood up, walked over to the general's desk and, leaning over him, continued: "And don't you shout at him as if he were a criminal. I think he's acted very bravely, and, if he hadn't decided to come back, you wouldn't have known anything about it. So there!"

The general's face turned a rather dirty peach colour, and Major Chandler, chivalrous by nature, hastened to create a diversion.

"I think it's fair to say, sir," he said, "that they have very likely dropped this plan as a result of O'Keefe running away. It would be common sense, if they feared he would spill the beans, to change their headquarters—probably put off this particular plan altogether."

The civilian, who had been smiling at this contretemps, now spoke again. "But they know he can't spill the beans," he said pleasantly. "He's dead."

"Dead?" said O'Keefe. "Who's dead?"

The civilian had drawn a midday newspaper from his pocket and now read from it. "Deserter Found Drowned. The body of a man identified as an army deserter named Alfred John Webb was recovered from the Thames at Fulham last night."

It took O'Keefe a second or two to work out the implications of this, and he then said softly: "Oh, my Gawd! Poor old Spider."

"I have a feeling," the civilian went on, in the same light tone, "that whoever did this fell deed did not have the advantage of Private O'Keefe's acquaintance. They presumably reported to their employers that the man Webb was now safe, and those cunning fellows will doubtless have rushed an understudy into service."

"You mean," Major Chandler said, "they'll still try to kill—you know who—at the ministry this afternoon?"

"Well," the civilian said, looking rather dubiously at his watch, "I don't know, of course, but I do think it's time we were popping over there."

* * *

At twenty-five past three, Major Chandler and O'Keefe sat in the back seat of a small black car parked near the main entrance to the Ministry of Defence. The two civilians sat in front. The others had remained at the War Office.

The major was now extremely hungry and he was in a bad temper. He had conceived a violent dislike for the whimsical civilian in charge.

"As a matter of interest," he asked now, in a voice choked by irritation, "can you tell me if Mr. X is in fact expected here today?"

"Ah, not my cup of tea, that," the man

The instant that the painter stepped into the cradle, one of the civil servants turned and hit him hard on the head

answered promptly. He stared out of the window.

"Everyone seems to take the story pretty seriously."

"Well, we can't have fellows dressing up as painters and shooting people through windows. Not at the ministry."

Major Chandler felt himself becoming unbearably exasperated. "Are we just going to sit here all afternoon?"

"I thought we might see what happens."

"O'Keefe and myself have not had any lunch."

"Do you know," said the civilian in surprise, "nor have I." He glanced at his watch. "But I dare say some of your questions will be answered in a moment, Major."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before a large black limousine drew up at the main entrance. A man in a black coat and striped trousers ran down the steps and bent inside the car. Five men got out of the car and, without ceremony, followed the man up the steps. All were in civilian dress and the major could only see their backs. The whole incident did not take more than half a minute and the black car drove off.

"Well, I'm damned!" Major Chandler said. "Was that—is it really true, then?"

"As to that," the civilian began, but he did not finish, for O'Keefe suddenly came to life.

"Here they are," he said.

A SMALL grey van came bowling round the corner of Birdcage Walk. It stopped a few yards short of the ministry doorway. Two men in painter's overalls got out.

"I recognize that one," O'Keefe said. "My partner."

The man indicated had opened the rear doors of the van, removed two coils of rope and was walking up the steps with them. The other man took the cradle out of the van and carried it to a point below the required window.

Major Chandler found his fingernails digging into the palms of his hands. Beside him, O'Keefe breathed heavily.

"Rather neat timing," said the civilian, a shade anxiously now, Major Chandler thought. "Ah, here come the heroes. The two johnnies on the right. Bowler hats. Very artistic operators."

The major gazed about him. The men indicated seemed to be two civil servants who were chatting amiably as they turned out of St. James's Park and prepared to cross the road. Both men wore bowler hats and carried neatly rolled umbrellas.

They were still a hundred yards from the cradle when the man who had gone into the building appeared on the roof and dropped the ropes. The painter below secured the cradle.

"Now then," said the civilian. "Little lesson in how to get a chap who has a big gun in his pocket."

The painter with the cradle, having signalled to his mate on the roof that all was well, looked carefully around him. The two civil servants, just drawing level with him, were now laughing heartily. The painter stepped into the cradle and turned round to face the wall. The very instant that he did so, one of the civil servants turned and hit him hard on the head.

The movement was so casual that Major Chandler wondered for a moment if he had imagined it. He couldn't see what had hit the painter. But something had. The man dropped to his knees and remained in the cradle with his head resting against the wall, as though raptly examining the fabric. The two civil servants picked him up and carried him into the ministry.

"Oh, very nice," said the civilian, chuckling a little. "Dear me, those two get better and better. I think we might drift across now, Major. There's a little identification to be done, and I dare say the fellows from the Fulham Road will be turning up soon. . . ."

Two hours later, Major Chandler finished writing his report in a small room at the War Office, and took it along to the general. He had still not eaten, but three stiff whiskies had served to keep up his strength. The long corridor had a tendency to float, he found; and the events of the day flickered in his mind like some strange hallucination.

The general read the report quickly. "Good work, Chandler. You acted very quickly this morning. Most commendable."

"Thank you, sir. I wondered if you felt able to—that is, I only had a back view of this—of Mr. X. As I've been so intimately concerned, I wondered——"

"It's a political matter, Chandler," the general said, staring rather bleakly up at him. "You needn't concern yourself with it."

"Oh, quite, sir. I merely thought as it's all over——"

"It is by no means all over. And I think your party had better remain here till"—he glanced at his watch—"seven o'clock. There's no need to read the Official Secrets Act exactly, but it would be as well if they all tried to forget it."

"Oh, yes, sir. Of course, sir."

"That's all then. I'll see this goes on your sheet," the general added with a smile.

"Thank you very much, sir."

Major Chandler took himself off, more dazed than ever, to join the others and, seating himself a little apart, strove to make some sense out of the day's proceedings. He was still racking his brains when the girl came and sat beside him.

"You won't let anything happen to Harry, will you, Major Chandler?"

The major had tended to forget this aspect of it. He gathered his wits together. "Ah, well, he'll get a fair hearing."

"Because he's acted very bravely really. He thought it his duty to come and tell you about this dreadful plot."

"I believe you had something to do with that," the major said.

"Yes, I did," she said with a queer little smile. "Was this man they tried to shoot important—some big Russian or——?"

"I don't think we ought to discuss that."

"No, but—do you know what I think?"

The major, gazing into Miss Polly Francis's clear, candid eyes, recalled that he had doubted this girl once today, and had been proved wrong. There was a somewhat uncanny look of ageless female intuition about her.

"I think," she said softly, "that he was somebody very important indeed, and that if he had been shot there might have been a war, and that's why they acted so quickly and sent for us in a helicopter——"

"Look here," said the major uneasily, "I really don't think you ought to talk about this, you know. . . ."

The girl smiled. "Oh, well, it's over now. But there might have been a war, mightn't there, Major Chandler?"

"Well, really——"

"If I hadn't made Harry go back. So you could say I stopped it, in a way?"

The major didn't say anything, but he was fully prepared to believe it. He was prepared to believe anything the doe-eyed Miss Francis might say. He gazed rather suspiciously at her.

"That's what I thought, anyway," she said. She took his hand and squeezed it quickly. "I know you'll do your best for Harry."

THE major watched her as she got up and walked away. What a remarkable girl this was who found qualities to love in O'Keefe, and dared to fire rockets at a full general, and might have stopped a war!

There was much in today's proceedings that Major Chandler had not understood, and still more that was out of his control. One thing at least, however, was indisputably within his province. He would certainly do his best for Harry O'Keefe. THE END

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IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

SKELETON COAST

The thrilling true story

sixty-three castaways

and their desperate struggle

for life in a barren land

by JOHN MARSH and LYMAN ANSON

Joanna Jones describes more fascinating adventures with the patients she tends as a . . .

NURSE ON THE DISTRICT

Wanted: a square deal for motorists

It costs sixpence to park for an hour in Mayfair. Lorraine Buist of Kent was one of the first to use the new meters

by ROBERT HOLLES

There's a bumpy road ahead if you own a car. The taxman's hand is in your pocket, there's nowhere to stop and the law is on your tail

THE COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT
THE PARKING OF CARS IN THIS CATTLE
MARKET UNLESS A FEE OF 2/6 IS PAID.
THE TICKET MUST BE PRODUCED TO
AN ATTENDANT ON DEMAND.
ANY DRIVER OF A VEHICLE
DISREGARDING THIS NOTICE WILL
FIND HIS TYRES DEFLATED.

The driver is fair game when it comes to parking. This notice was put up at Spalding

Motoring organizations protested strongly against the police use of radar speed traps

ANTHONY THORNE, a Windsor antique dealer, was unpleasantly surprised one morning last September to find that the local police had placed "No Parking" notices outside his shop in Church Street. Alarmed by the prospect of a heavy fall in custom, Thorne protested that the police signs were unauthorized, and erected a notice of his own which guaranteed parking space to his clients.

The local council invited Alex Samuels, traffic adviser to the Ministry of Transport, to report on traffic conditions in the town. Shortly after his visit the "No Parking" signs went up in Church Street—officially.

A similar situation on a larger scale occurred in Southend at Whitsun, when the chief constable classified a large stretch of the seafront as a non-parking area, in spite of bitter protests from local traders. But at Tunbridge Wells, shopkeepers recently complained to the local council that motorists who parked their cars all day in a road outside the railway station were preventing potential customers from getting into the town. The council banned parking in the station approaches.

In each case the struggle was waged between commercial interests in the area, and the local authority responsible for traffic control. The claims of the motorist were hardly considered to be relevant. Parking restrictions have become so widespread throughout Britain that, so long as they hurt nobody but the motorist, they are considered normal and necessary.

For ten years the Automobile Association, the Royal Automobile Club and other motoring organizations have been fighting against steadily worsening motoring conditions. Many motorists, faced with ever-increasing costs, parking restrictions, road congestion and a heavy accident rate, consider that the battle has been a losing one.

The serious problems raised by the growing volume of traffic on Britain's inadequate roads have been responsible for a corresponding growth of restrictive measures against the motorist, imposed at every level of elected authority, and supported by every political party.

In September, 1956, Harold Watkinson, Minister of Transport, declared: "The free right of one man in one large motor-car to occupy eighty or ninety square feet of the Queen's Highway in the inner zones of our cities has got to stop." Jo Grimond, the Liberal leader, suggested during a debate on road congestion four years ago that a corporation should be set up to build new roads and charge tolls for their use.

The Road Traffic Act of 1956 introduced parking meters for the first time and provided for the compulsory testing of vehicles for roadworthiness by licensed motor engineers. In the same year purchase tax was imposed on home-built sports cars and vans which had been converted to carry passengers.

In June, 1958, Ernest Davies, a Labour M.P., tried to annul an order which authorized the use of parking meters in Westminster. But Davies wasn't primarily concerned about the rights of motorists—his objections were based on the claim that the scheme's success would depend upon enforcement, and that it was physically impossible for the police to enforce all the restrictions already imposed upon motorists.

He was assured by George Nugent, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, that the Westminster City Council intended to enrol a supervisor and eight attendants to assist police in reporting offences on the 647 parking meters, which were expected to cut parking space by half.

During the subsequent debate Nugent rejected a suggestion that the meters should be scrapped in favour of a French system of parking control which involved the use of discs. He claimed that the French system would lead to an increase of parking prosecutions, and impose an intolerable strain on the courts.

In 1940 the Roadfarers' Club was formed by a number of prominent motorists to defend the rights of road users. The club advocates special courts for motorists, the abolition of the speed limit and a policy of greater freedom on the roads.

The secretary, portly Frederick Camm, says: "The present position is hopeless. There are more than two thousand regulations concerning

the construction and use of cars, which have no effect other than to provide police forces with a healthy crop of sitting-bird cases. It's an offence to be in a hurry. A motorist can be prosecuted for leaving his car anywhere on the highway; this means that his only defence against obstruction is to prove his car wasn't there."

The Club recently defended a motorist who was prosecuted for parking outside his own shop, and a woman charged with obstructing the police by refusing to give her age when charged for a parking offence.

In 1956 police prosecutions against motorists in England and Wales totalled 712,962; more than 200,000 were concerned with obstruction, parking and speeding offences. Non-indictable motoring offences have become so common that a conviction no longer carries any stigma.

One motorist was convicted in 1953 of obstructing a public footpath under a law passed in 1839—years before cars were invented. Another was prosecuted recently for conveying a bottle of orange juice from his home to his shop, where it was to be sold, without having a commercial licence.

In 1955 a motorist was summoned for having his vision impeded by stickers on the windscreen. The case was dismissed after the defending solicitor claimed that visibility would have been considerably less in a car with one windscreen wiper during a heavy snowstorm.

A few years ago Lord Brabazon, the pioneer aviator and motorist, former Minister of Transport, and leading member of numerous motoring organizations, was summoned for speeding at Blackheath. He angrily denied the charge, and maintained that the evidence against him had been obtained by only one police witness who had checked his speed over a hundred yards. He was fined, and his licence was endorsed.

The most recent technical devices employed by the police include radar speed traps and electronic stop-watches linked to the road by rubber tubes. Television screens were recently erected in Durham to assist the police in controlling traffic. Soon after they were installed, they were used to prosecute a motorist for "jumping" the traffic lights.

Hundreds of town and borough councils have abandoned the principle of free car parking facilities which was taken for granted until a few years ago. At Spalding, in Lincolnshire, a council notice in the cattle market threatened that the tyres of all cars belonging to motorists who had not paid the 2s. 6d. parking fee would be deflated.

At Ipswich, in March, three council house tenants were given notice to quit their homes because they parked their cars in their front gardens. When the cars were moved a few feet away to the grass verge, the notices were temporarily withdrawn while the council debated whether the new arrangement was to be permitted. In the same month thirty parents, accompanied by local road safety officers, organized a procession to demonstrate against motorists who parked bumper to bumper outside schools in the Victoria district of London.

The development since 1945 of a vast new income group with the economic capacity to own and run cars has led to a steady decline in the standards of motoring and a continual rise in cost, recently estimated by the R.A.C. at 7½d. a mile for a 10 h.p. saloon car covering 10,000 miles in a year.

SINCE 1950 the number of private cars in Britain has doubled. In that year the revenue from fuel tax, vehicle tax and purchase tax on cars totalled £140 million, equal to 3.3 per cent of the national revenue. By 1956 the total had swelled to £480 million, equal to 9.8 per cent of the national revenue.

Successive Chancellors of the Exchequer have declined to tamper with such a lucrative source of income, which is easy to collect and has so far shown no signs of killing off the victims' eager thirst for mobility, however penal the cost.

Originally raised as a road improvement fund, taxes on vehicles and petrol are now almost a direct subsidy for expenditure in other directions.

The Road Fund, initiated by Lloyd George in 1909, was spent annually on road development, but in 1926 a large portion of the fund was put to other uses by Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

By 1950, when the revenue from motor taxation no longer bore any relation to the amount spent on the roads, a government committee recommended that the fund should be allowed to lapse. In 1955, when it was finally abolished, £90 million was spent on the roads by the government and local authorities, out of a total revenue of £423 million.

The failure of any government since the war to tackle the road problem, made progressively more urgent by the expanding volume of traffic, has led to road congestion of nightmare proportions during peak traffic hours at thousands of black spots and bottlenecks in every part of Britain.

Last year William Glanville, Director of the Road Research Laboratory at Langley, Bucks—a government department—read a paper on the basic needs for the roads of Great Britain to a conference held by the Institution of Civil Engineers. The contents were virtually an indictment of government neglect of the roads.

Glanville's researches showed that a quarter of Britain's traffic load was carried by one per cent of the road system. In 1956 traffic crawled through Glasgow at an average 8 m.p.h., and through parts of central London at 6 m.p.h. Traffic on 13 per cent of the trunk road system had reached double its intended capacity.

Glanville estimated that the loss of man-hours, increased petrol consumption, high accident rate, wear and tear of vehicles and other factors caused by road congestion were currently costing motorists and other road users a total of £500 million a year. He worked on the assumption that the easing of the problem would improve the speed of urban traffic by 5 m.p.h. and of rural traffic by 8 m.p.h.

His assessment of the future situation, assuming that the roads were not substantially improved, was bleak. An immediate expenditure of £420 million was needed for new trunk roads, with a further spending of £1,200 million to keep abreast of the increase of traffic.

Three years ago the motoring and road transport organizations set up the Roads Campaign Council to attract public attention to the need for better roads. Basil Rogers, the council's secretary, says: "We have to fight against the reluctance of governments to pay out large sums of money on projects which will not yield an immediate and tangible profit. The huge losses suffered through congestion come out of the pocket of the public, and not out of the Treasury; if they did, the problem would never have been allowed to get so desperate."

In 1957 the Ministry of Transport authorized the spending of £240 million on new road projects in the next four years. The first motorway—a dual-carriageway motor road with intersections which fly over or under—is being constructed between London and Birmingham.

Rogers considered that the proposed improvement schemes will do little more than keep abreast of increasing traffic. He points out that in 1954 when the last international census was taken, the British motorist, with a traffic density of 20.8 vehicles per mile of road, was well ahead of his nearest rival, the United States, with a density of 16.9.

But in the U.S.A. there is already one vehicle to every 2.6 inhabitants, while in Britain, with one vehicle to 7.6 inhabitants, there is much more scope for expansion.

The certainty that traffic will increase is just about the only dependable factor in the future of British motoring. A police inspector recently told the road safety committee at Newton Abbott that he had received complaints about traffic noises from the residents of a street in the town. When he went to investigate he saw twenty-five cars going up and down the street. They were all equipped with L-plates. THE END

Congestion at Walton-on-Thames. The motorist always suffers when the traffic problem is tackled. But Walton traders are fighting one local attempt to ban street parking

Terror in the sun

By KATE MANGO

ILLUSTRATED BY GAFFRON

Death stalks the streets where little Panayota plays. Niko must find her . . . before the horror strikes

NIKO, the shoe-shine boy, lifted his head as the car passed through the square and nosed towards the pine-covered slopes below the village. He saw the youth at the wheel, pale and city-clad; and the big brown dog sitting beside him, its tongue lolling out as if it felt the heat of the day.

Niko watched idly as the car swung out of the square; then he lay down again. Nothing stirred now in the village. There was nothing to do but wait for the cool of the evening, when the young men, off to Athens or out to impress the girls, would need his services.

He slept for some time, and awoke with a shock. He sat upright, listening to a hubbub which had broken out somewhere in the village. The commotion and screaming seemed to be coming nearer. In the distance could be heard a weird howling which made his scalp prickle.

"Mad dog!"

The words brought him instantly to his feet, and along with him men and women who had been lying on blankets across the thresholds of their houses and shops. The square emptied in a twinkling, and Niko found himself running towards his home.

Panayota! Where was his sister? His mother was safe enough, not due home from the factory for another hour or so. But there was no knowing where Panayota might be. Their landlady, Maria, looked after her along with her own small children; but there was no point in keeping her in the house. She played with the other children about the alleys.

Niko sped into Maria's front room. He saw at a glance that all her own children were with her. She was washing the eldest; the others stood in a row waiting their turn.

"There's a mad dog loose in the village," he gasped. "Where's my sister?"

In the pause of horror which followed his words, he listened for the alarm, and could hear it faintly.

"A mad dog! Holy Mother!" Maria cried, crossing herself. "The saints keep us from harm." She ran out on to the hard-baked floor of the alley and looked this way and that. "Panayota, Panayota," she called. "She was here not long ago."

The noise from the village seemed to Niko to be growing louder as the alarm came nearer. "You'd best shut yourself in, *Kyria* Maria," he said. "I'll find Panayota."

The doors and windows of the nearby cottages were already closed and barred. Niko saw the face of a neighbour pressed against a window, and yelled, "Panayota?" The face, old Mitso's, looked dubious. He spoke to somebody inside the room, then turned back and pointed up the alley, in the direction away from the square.

Niko ran off, looking to right and left as he went, terrified by the thought of the slavering hound which might at any moment appear from a side-turning. They said that a mad dog's sight went, that it couldn't properly see you, but no doubt it could still smell and hear. Niko tried to tread more lightly. *Where are the police?* he wondered. Old Takis, the *horofilakas,* was perhaps at this moment unhitching his heavy revolver to shoot the dog down. Niko stopped and waited, tense, for the sound of the shots which would tell the village the terror had passed . . . but they did not come.

At the end of the settlement, he stepped out into a shady, tree-lined road. Streams of sweat rolled from him, yet he felt cold. Where could Panayota be? There was a chance that she had found her way to the priest's house, at the foot of the hill. She liked to play there, and around the church.

Niko was almost there when he was struck by the absolute stillness of the road and countryside. Nothing moved. Even for siesta-time

The long, long trail winds up with Guinness

IT MUST have been five—no, three-and-a-half—well, at least a couple of miles. Nearly all uphill too ! No wonder you're hot and tired. And what more natural than a halt for a snack and a glass of Guinness.

Once you've discovered the wonderful flair that Guinness has for quenching a thirst, you'll never want anything else. Guinness does more than merely refresh.

With a snack of bread and cheese and tomatoes, Guinness makes a completely balanced meal. There's so much goodness in Guinness apart from its appetising taste.

Study the rich, dark-ruby colour of Guinness—it's completely natural, like everything else about it. Roasted barley used in the brewing is the reason. This also accounts for the fascinating *roasted* flavour you find in Guinness. Ah! a taste for Guinness is well worth acquiring.

G.E. 3029

this was unusual, and the sun was beginning to decline. He realized that the word had gone round of the danger at large on the roads.

The lay sister who cared for the priest's house came to the door as he approached. He greeted her formally, even in this moment of stress, and asked if she had seen Panayota.

"She's not been here," the lay sister said.

"Then shut yourself in, and tell the Father," Niko advised. "There's a mad dog loose in the village."

As he ran off, he heard the door of the house being closed and barred.

Over towards the east, where the mayor's house stood alone on its cyclamen-starred slope, he stood on a little rise and looked all about him, straining his eyes for a sight of the small figure of his sister. Not a sign of her.

It was then, as he took a few breaths of the warm, acacia-scented air before starting to run again, that he heard it, borne on the light breeze now springing up—the unmistakable howling of the mad dog. It was a sound he had never heard before, though he had heard it described. Yet there was no question of what it could be.

It seemed not to be far off; and it seemed to come from the direction in which he must go. He had no choice but to go on. Where else could Panayota be? He had looked all through the rest of the neighbourhood. Unless she had strayed right away. . . .

Moving fast, he began to examine minutely every flicker of a leaf, every crack of a twig or rattle of stone. A lizard, sunning itself on a rock, looked up as he passed, then darted to cover. But Niko knew there could be no taking cover for him until he had either found Panayota or met the mad dog face to face.

A row of eucalyptus trees came in sight just beyond the verge of the road, which had widened and become more open. As he ran, he calculated their nearness. He might have to try to find foothold on a smooth trunk.

By the time he had worked his way right round the eastern side of the village and down towards the pine-woods where the alarm had started, he was sobbing with shortness of breath and anguish.

He had just passed the eastern end of the square when there was a sound of wheels and a screech of brakes. Jack Phillips's battered jeep rattled to a stop beside him.

"Jump in, Niko. You shouldn't be out."

Niko looked up into the face of his friend, the English officer who worked with the British Naval Mission in Athens and lodged in the village.

"I can't *Kyrie*. I must go on. Panayota is somewhere about."

"Get in, quick."

Niko leaped into the seat beside Jack, and the jeep started off.

"Where might she be?"

"God grant she has somehow got home," sobbed Niko. "I've searched everywhere. There's only the pine-woods left."

As he became calmer, Niko realized that the countryside was silent again. He could no longer hear that dreadful howling.

"Perhaps old Takis has shot it by now," he said hopefully.

"He hadn't when I saw him just now. I said I'd have a go myself."

Niko saw that Jack was carrying a big police revolver and felt reassured. But he hardly dared look at the roadway along which they sped, lest at the next turn he might see Panayota lying there; or, worse, stumbling towards them with the drunken gait which would mean she had been bitten.

They reached a place where the road forked, bounded on each side by high rocky banks. Before and above them lay the pine-wood.

"Which way shall we go?" Jack murmured to himself. Then he was silent, trying to hear some sound which would give them direction.

"I hear something," Niko suddenly said in a strained whisper. They both listened. Gradually the sounds resolved themselves into a murmur, then a trampling. Through the rough country above the bank to the west appeared a group of villagers, rough-clad men, each bearing some snatched-up weapon. They were headed by Takis, the constable, his revolver at the ready.

When they saw the jeep, the men came crowding over, pouring down the bank to surround it, all talking at once.

"Have you seen anything?"

"No."

Takis held up a hand. "Too much noise," he said gravely. "Let us be quiet a moment."

In the silence that followed, Niko could hear the call of a bird in the woods, the whisper of the pine-needles, the breathing of his companions . . . and something else. All strained forward, trying to catch and identify that sound.

Suddenly, all together, they froze; Takis with his mouth open to speak. The same horror gripped them all.

Around a far bend in the road came the child Panayota; walking slowly, one hand lightly laid on the shaggy neck of a large brown dog. The animal stumbled and slavered along beside her, but she seemed both unharmed and completely unafraid.

Niko bounded out of the jeep and ran forward. With a sharp exclamation, Jack started up and the men ran behind the jeep as it shot forward. Niko reached his sister and knelt down beside her. The dog stood panting, its swollen and discoloured tongue protruding.

Takis rushed up on to the verge opposite Panayota and took careful aim at the dog. Niko saw him, and threw himself in the way. "Don't shoot," he screamed.

Jack, who had leaped from the jeep, knocked Takis's arm and the shot went wide. The trembling dog suddenly collapsed into the roadway. Jack kneeled down beside it. He found a piece of coarse string deeply embedded in the flesh of its neck, and began carefully to loosen it.

The villagers were still crowded some distance away, afraid. Takis was protesting and arguing with Jack, who took no notice until he had thoroughly examined the dog.

"I found him down there, by the stream," Panayota was saying to Niko. "He must have been thirsty, poor doggy. He wouldn't stop drinking."

"This is no mad dog," Niko said.

The villagers heard the words, and came closer.

"It is true that a mad dog fears water," Takis said ponderously.

"This dog has been vilely treated," Jack said. "Look where the string has sawed its way into the flesh. No wonder people took it for mad. It has been tied up somewhere, and broken loose, and in this heat and with a terrible thirst. . . ."

Jack walked back with Niko and Panayota to the place where the child had found it. The stream was a mere trickle, almost dried up by the summer heat. The marks where the dog had scrambled its way down were quite plain.

Niko suddenly knew just what had happened. He remembered the car which had passed through the village.

"It has been abandoned by somebody," he said as they turned to go back to the others. "Somebody who left it to starve and die in the woods rather than kill it outright."

When they got back to where the dog still lay in the roadway, Panayota squatted down beside it in the dust. Its large brown eyes looked up at her with devotion as she caressed it.

"It will have to be killed all the same," Takis remarked heavily.

The villagers all agreed. In Greece, which like all hot countries must take drastic steps against rabies, all unclaimed dogs are shot or poisoned, and all owned ones must be led or muzzled.

Jack had been watching the two children with the large, unlovely dog.

"Is that really necessary?" he asked. "I know it's the law, but. . . ."

"The dog must have an owner," Takis said.

"Very well, then." Jack stood up and dusted the knees of his trousers. "I am its owner. Or Niko. Or Panayota. We'll all go into Athens and have it seen by a vet, and buy it a muzzle or lead."

Panayota, of course, did not fully understand, but Niko did. He began to do a dance of delight in the roadway.

The mad dog scare was over. THE END

© *Kate Mango, 1958*

End of term

by VALERIE MINOGUE

Light trembles in the yawning sky,
the sun is melting on the stone:
over the river feckless leaves
dance down as if they would belie
the tender spirals of the last
that fall regretfully alone.

A lazy punt lolls slowly by
with water dripping from the pole,
dripping with an evening sound
that echoes through the river haze,
and Time is walking out again
with Summer down the cooling trees,
where scattered moments lost like rain
hang on the fragile web of days.

Silver lining in your picnic hamper

by RENÉ LECLER

It keeps tea warm and ice-cream cold. The secret? Nothing in it

THE man visiting Leslie Thomas Sawney, managing director of a firm of vacuum vessel manufacturers, was an ardent dog lover. He was often away from home, he said, and as his Alsatian dog objected to cold meals he suggested that Sawney should market a flask which any dog could open. Sawney pondered this problem, but because he could see little future in anything designed to keep a dog's dinner hot, he reluctantly rejected the idea.

Six months later, the same man called again. This time he brought with him a four-foot high machine based on a clockwork mechanism which uncorked the flask and tipped it over the animal's platter when dinner time came around. "It looked like a Heath Robinson affair, but I had to congratulate him on his inventiveness," says Sawney.

Sawney's vacuum flasks solve many of the problems which worry his customers. An American millionaire once complained that while he wanted to take his yacht to Majorca, his favourite cook had to remain in Italy. Sawney promptly sold him four one-gallon jars, and every day for a month the gourmet's midday meal was flown from Rome to Majorca.

Some people, says Sawney, have the strangest ideas about his product. A few weeks ago he was standing by the vacuum flask counter of a large London store when an elderly woman approached, pointed to the smallest flask available and said to the assistant: "That's just the thing I need to keep my hands warm inside my muff."

A tall, urbane Londoner of fifty-nine, Sawney is chairman and managing director of Thermos Limited, one of five British firms manufacturing vacuum vessels. Every week his six hundred employees make about 130,000 flasks, jugs and jars—about half this country's production—ranging from a pint to ten gallons.

Most people still use vacuum flasks for picnics, holidays and travel. But when, some years ago, a London tropical fish dealer approached Sawney and his technical manager, Herbert Bateson, with the problem of importing tropical fish into this country, they had an answer within a few days. They proved that fish, poured into gallon jars with water at the right temperature, would survive four days if one seventh of the space was left for air. Most European aquarists now use this method.

Sawney spends several weeks every year visiting a few of the eighty countries to which he exports vacuum vessels. He has found his product in lonely native trading posts in Rhodesia, India, Ceylon, Singapore, Iceland and once, full of hot tea, in the private cabins of the Hongkong-Macao ferry. Visiting India some years ago he discovered that, despite independence, Indian Army canteens had sold over 50,000 Coronation souvenir flasks. Now, whenever an event suggests it, he is quick in marketing another souvenir vessel, and one of the latest he produced was one to commemorate the independence of Ghana, in West Africa.

For wealthy private individuals, Sawney has made flasks encased in monogrammed gold and silver plate, and one order some months ago was for a solid gold flask to fit in the Rolls-Royce of an oil-rich Middle East sheikh. In a single day last year he received orders for three dozen jugs for the Bermuda club where President Eisenhower and Mr. Macmillan met, and another for a large black jar for use in a well-known crematorium. He says: "I still don't know what they want it for and, frankly, I am a little scared to ask."

Research has proved that vacuum vessels preserve the temperature of their contents even when placed at the bottom of diving tanks or when built into a stratospheric rocket. They are in common use in ambulances, liners—the Queen Elizabeth carries two thousand of them—in hospitals and Service departments. In 1944 thousands of three-pint flasks were dropped over Arnhem for parachutists, and every bomber flying over Germany carried a dozen flasks.

In its fifty years, Sawney's firm has supplied almost every scientific expedition, starting with Shackleton's polar voyage in 1912. Sir John Hunt's Everest team used vacuum vessels to bring back specimens of high-altitude vegetation, and just recently Sawney and his men designed vessels with a shock-absorbing sponge rubber cushion inside the canisters for Dr. Vivian Fuchs's Antarctic expedition. When, some years ago, Sawney discovered that the semen used in the artificial insemination of cattle had to be kept below freezing point during transit, he devised a vessel with a small test tube fitted into the stopper and exported hundreds to Canada, India and Central Africa.

Vaccines are also kept in vacuum vessels. Says Sawney: "Before I travelled to Rhodesia two years ago I visited a London clinic for some yellow fever inoculations and I was pleased to see that they kept the stuff in our jars."

Some years ago a Canadian forestry expert called on him, placed a beetle on his desk and said: "I must take this insect back to Canada with me. We hope it will destroy some of our pests, but if the temperature varies too much on the way back it will die!" Sawney and the forestry expert carried out experiments in his Brentwood, Essex, factory, and a week later the Canadian flew home with three vacuum flasks full of beetles.

Sawney's vessels have also helped to improve the performance of racing motor-cycles at the TT races on the Isle of Man. Mechanics fill vacuum jars with hot oil and just before a race starts pour the oil into the motor-cycle engines, thereby improving the speed by a few miles an hour over the first few laps.

Though Sawney's day-to-day work is concerned with making vacuum vessels for general use, he has a soft spot for the oddity. One would-be inventor got him interested in a helmet with a vacuum lining to be fitted over a woman's head during the setting of a permanent wave. "For all I know," says Sawney, "he is still

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Emma Jo Johnson listens to the Court appealing against her life sentence

Eight just men free the innocent

by R. GORDON LILES

The Court of Last Resort brings hope of life to the doomed—victims of the law's mistakes

Erle Stanley Gardner, founder of the Court, questions Mrs. Bill Keys, whose husband was convicted of murder. Gardner discovered new evidence: Keys was released from San Quentin

IN an L-shaped office twenty-one floors above mid-Manhattan, Gene Lowall, special investigator of "The Court of Last Resort," slipped a neatly-penned letter from his mail one morning last February and handed it across the desk to his visitor.

It was dated February 7, and bore the address of a California penitentiary. "As a prison chaplain over a long period," it began, "I have heard countless prisoners declare their innocence, but never have I met one with such a convincing story. This man has been locked up here eight years for murder. He can now locate a vital witness who was missing at his trial and I am thoroughly satisfied that his case is worth investigating. . . ."

Lowall took back the note and scanned it again. "Most of our mail comes from utter crackpots," he said, "but this seems genuine enough for the Court to follow up."

"The Court" is an organization run by altruistic Americans, each distinguished in various phases of law and criminology, who make an expensive hobby of seeking out wrongly convicted people and trying to secure their release. Since 1948 they have freed more than thirty men and women held guilty of murder.

This unique work of correcting the mistakes of the law began ten years ago through an appeal from another prison chaplain.

The prisoner then was Clarence Boggie, who had been in Washington State Penitentiary for thirteen years. He had been found guilty of bludgeoning to death an old recluse, Moritz Peterson, in a shack at Spokane, a wealthy commercial town in Washington State.

Months after the crime an habitual criminal told the baffled police that Boggie had walked up to him and confessed to the killing. When the police picked him up, Boggie was wearing a tattered overcoat similar to one Peterson had kept in his shack. At his trial the prosecution presented what appeared to be a watertight case. A twelve-year-old boy identified Boggie as the man who ran from the murdered man's shack.

Boggie recounted his unlikely story—that he had been in a second-hand clothing store in Portland, Oregon, when a man walked in and offered the overcoat to the proprietor for a dollar. The storekeeper haggled over the price, Boggie said, and he himself produced a dollar bill and took the garment.

The court was unconvinced, and Boggie was convicted and sentenced for life. In jail he continued to maintain his innocence and thirteen years later, in 1948, a prison chaplain, who firmly believed his story, took a report of the case to the Californian ranch home of Erle Stanley Gardner.

Gardner, a noted lawyer and prolific writer of mystery novels, had been one of the founders of the Court of Last Resort. With his friend Harry Steeger, New York publisher of a widely circulated men's magazine, he had planned the court while they were lying around a camp fire one night during a jeep trip down Lower California, the large peninsula off Mexico's west coast. Boggie's was their first big case.

Gardner was deeply impressed by the chaplain's story. He went to the jail and talked to Boggie. "I found him a most peculiar man," he recalls. But reading the transcript of the

Continued on page 26

Busey walked like a ghost into the camp, past the gambling and drinking, past the camp fires and the sizzling

Back from the dead

he came—back

from his grave in the

mountains . . .

back to claim a

terrible vengeance

Man al

by CHAD OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

SCREENED by the thick willow brush, Busey Shafter stood knee-deep in the cold water of the beaver pond. The sun was shining brightly, warming the faded flannel back of his shirt as Busey bent over at his work. He set the beaver trap mechanically, trying to ignore the chill knot of worry in his chest.

At last he waded out of the pond, keeping clear of the mound of mud and branches that was the beaver house. He climbed out on the bank and stood up in the grass of the high mountain meadow. His joints were stiff and his rheumatism—the legacy of years spent in icy streams—was bothering him again.

He walked over and picked up his heavy Hawken rifle and checked its load. Something was wrong. Busey couldn't quite figure it, but he knew that something was wrong. A mountain man had a nose for trouble; he could smell it on the wind.

It had been a hard winter, that winter of 1833, hard on men and hard on horses. And he had been a fool to come into the mountains with Tom Royce for a partner. Tom knew his beaver right enough and he could handle a rifle, but it took more than that to make a man who could live in the Shining Mountains. The mountains were hard and when a man lost his nerve he was dangerous—dangerous to himself and dangerous to others. It was a long way to another white man.

Busey ducked low and splashed back across the stream, sure-footed on the slippery rocks. There was a rocky ridge on the far side of the stream. Busey had one cardinal rule when danger threatened: get to the high ground, and get there fast.

He heaved himself out on the bank and crawled on his belly into a clump of willows. He turned, sliding his rifle out in front of him. His brown eyes narrowed, scanning the opposite bank. He stared at every bush, every flower.

There. That stand of willows, back from the stream. The branches falling and rising as something crept along a trail. It couldn't be a bear or a cat. . . .

Without warning, sudden as death, he saw a

steaks. He was a figure wild and strange, marked by loneliness and cold . . . a figure back from the grave

One

painted face, glimpsed the shadow of shoulders. He never saw the bow, but an arrow whizzed out of the brush and thudded into the earth not a foot from his face.

There was a scream of triumph and a figure rose out of the willows—and another, and another. There were five of them, dressed in skin shirts and breech-clouts, their painted faces framed by long, black hair. Utes.

Busey smiled thinly. It was the dream of every raiding party to catch a white man alone.

He would have to risk a shot, so Tom could hear. Then, if he could get enough of a lead to reload, he might be able to bluff them out until Tom came up. He eyed the Utes, who were working up their courage to cross the stream. That big buck must have figured his arrow had struck home; Busey had not moved.

"You crowed a mite too soon," he whispered.

He aimed and fired. The Indian who had loosed the arrow grabbed at his chest and pitched back into the willows.

Instantly, Busey moved. He was helpless now with an empty rifle. He scrambled through the brush in a weaving run, never presenting a target. An arrow bounced off a boulder ahead of him and he felt a searing pain in his right shoulder. They'd winged him.

He redoubled his efforts. He had to get a lead on them—a lead of at least thirty seconds. He hit a game trail and sprinted up it. He spotted a place where he could fort up behind a row of boulders and dived into it.

Now. Busey's fingers worked with cool, desperate efficiency. Patch the bullet, seat the ball, prime. He had done it. He had a rifle again. A rifle that fired one shot. And there were four Utes left.

Busey relaxed a little. He had a clear sight down the trail and he was reasonably protected on the three other sides. The Utes wouldn't rush a man with a loaded rifle in a spot like this, not right away. He could hear them calling to one another just out of range, perhaps a hundred and fifty yards down the ridge.

He got his wind back, pulled out a piece of jerky and bit off a chunk to chew. He was high enough up now so that he could see out to the far ridge where Tom was trapping. Tom had his horse with him; he must have heard the shot. Where was he?

His brown eyes swept the ridge, picked up a flicker of movement. He squinted and the movement resolved itself into a man on horseback, moving fast. But the man was headed away, back to camp. Tom Royce had sold him out. Busey spat in disgust. No man ever abandoned another in a tight spot; no man ever did.

"You'll pay for that," he said aloud. "You'll pay plenty."

A Ute warrior stepped out into the open. He stood there, just within range of Busey's Hawken. He raised both arms contemptuously and spoke sign language. He called Busey a dog, a woman, a rabbit. He folded his arms across his chest and stood still, waiting.

Busey held his fire. He dug a fairly clean cloth out of his kit and worked it under his shirt to halt the flow of blood from his wound. He watched the Indian, not without respect. The brave had guts, which was more than he could say for Tom Royce.

The Ute waved to his companions, making an exaggerated gesture so that Busey could not fail to see. The three other Indians stepped out into plain view, their bows ready in their hands. Then the four of them began walking slowly up the trail toward Busey. They came twenty yards, thirty. Forty. Busey drew a bead on the leading brave. It was a certain shot, but he held his fire.

The Indians gabbled at him in Ute. They made signs. They paraded in front of him, offering targets. Busey waited, eyes squinted, nerves steady. The Indians steeled themselves. They fitted arrows into their bows. They whooped with high, shrieking yells. They rushed him, running full speed up the trail. Two arrows were loosed at him on the run, but they bounced harmlessly off the rocks. If the Indians didn't stop. . . .

They did. They halted their rush after twenty yards and went to ground in the rocks. Every few seconds Busey caught a glimpse of a head and shoulders, and an arrow whizzed into the hillside by his body.

After five minutes the Utes stopped wasting arrows. The same brave stood up, showing himself. He danced in plain sight, trying to draw a shot. Busey's finger itched on the

trigger. It was a ridiculously easy shot, but he did not fire. The brave gave up finally and ducked down behind the rocks on the trail. There was a sudden, complete silence.

Busey drew his skinning knife and placed it by his side. He figured he had three hours of daylight left. If he could hold out that long he had a chance.

The long silence continued. Busey was not afraid. He knew that the Utes could take him if they wanted him badly enough; there was no possible way he could get four of them before they got to him in a headlong attack.

But Busey knew Indians. If he hadn't known them he wouldn't be alive, not after years of trapping in the Rockies. An Indian figured the percentages, always. They were not soldiers, fighting pitched battles at whatever the cost. Indian warfare was a series of hit-and-run raids, in which a brave tried to gain prestige and big medicine. To an Indian, rushing a man with a loaded rifle was stupid. The trick was to get him to fire and then to take him before he could reload.

There were four Utes. Busey might have a pistol, for all they knew, and that meant he could get two of them before they could lift his hair—maybe more if he was good with his knife. It just wasn't worth it, as long as he had his Hawken ready. But once he fired he was through.

Busey waited, hearing nothing.

The sun dropped lower. Long black shadows crept across the valley floor and snaked over the rocks. The evening wind rustled through the grasses and the willows, knife-edged even in spring.

Busey did not move. He saw no sign of the Utes. They might have gone or they might be waiting for him. Probably they were gone, after his horse. Indians seldom fought at night. The spirits walked beneath the moon and a man's medicine was bad.

The sun eased down behind the western ridge. Still Busey did not move. His leather breeches and buffalo-skin leggings had dried stiff and his deerskin moccasins were cold. He had his hat, but his buffalo robe was back at the camp. His joints were sore, but the wound in his shoulder had settled down into a numb throbbing.

WHEN the moon was a high silver dollar in the starry sky he eased himself up and slipped down the approach to his left. He moved silently, a shadow among the rocks, his knife ready in his hand. He made a long detour through the willows of the stream bank, then forded the stream without a sound, working with the current. He made his way to the far ridge where he had seen Tom Royce, then along to a point where he could look down on his camp.

The camp was deserted. There was no fire. The horses were gone. In the moonlight he could see that the beaver pelts had also vanished. There was nothing left.

Busey wasted no time. Shivering with the cold, he climbed the ridge and set his course by the stars. He would have to keep to the ridges; a man alone in this country had to be careful. He was hungry and tired and a little feverish.

He was a hundred miles from the rendezvous. There was nobody to help him and he was on foot in difficult country. He smiled a cold, hard smile. He saw Tom Royce's face before him as he walked. Tom might have headed back for Bent's Fort, but he didn't think so. He would go on to the rendezvous on the South Fork, thinking him dead, packing his beaver pelts.

"You made a mistake, hoss," Busey whispered, clenching his knife. "You made a bad mistake. This child is comin' in."

• • •

It was a wild sight, that South Fork rendezvous in 1833, a sight that warmed the blood and brightened the eye. Sun bleached tepees dotted the plain along the cottonwood grove and piles of supplies and pelts were everywhere. Cooking fires trailed blue smoke into a cloudless sky and horses filled the open plain, racing and walking and grazing on tufts of dusty grass. Trappers were there from all over the southern Rockies, and there were more Indians than white men: Snakes and Flatheads and Utes and friendly Crows, even a small party of Blackfeet down from the north. All of them were drinking the whisky of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company at five dollars a pint and parading their young squaws for the benefit of the woman-starved trappers.

Busey walked into the rendezvous, past the gambling and the drinking and the loving, past the camp fires and the sizzling steaks. He walked like a ghost and behind him he left a thin trail of silence.

Eyes followed him, hardly believing what they saw. He was a figure wild and strange, marked by loneliness and the cold of long nights without a revealing fire, a figure that had come back from the dead.

HE found one of the old ones squatting before a fire. Little bandy-legged Hank Miller leaped to his feet, stared and threw his hard arms around him. "Buse! Old Buse! Damn me, I heard you was dead!"

Busey's cracked lips managed a smile. "I take a lot of killin', Hank. Some coffee and whisky and a slab of meat will fix me up right near good as new."

Hank laughed. He waited, watching while Busey wolfed down enough meat for five men. He refilled the coffee cup and offered Busey a pipe and some tobacco. He waited until Busey had fired up and was settled with his back against a log.

Busey broke the silence. "Sawbones in camp? I took an arrow in my shoulder a spell back."

Hank nodded. "Take more'n an Injun arrow to put Busey Shafter away."

Busey smoked in silence.

"Tom Royce come in," Hank said finally. "Come in loaded down with beaver plews, leadin' yore pack mule. Said he'd buried you up on Deer Creek."

"He just about did."

"Reckon you take a sight of buryin'."

"He didn't plant me deep enough, Hank."

"Tom's still here, camped over yonder." Hank waved a stubby arm. "Reckon you'll be wantin' to meet up with him."

"A man might figure that." Busey stretched, his tired muscles one dull ache. "Right now I want to sleep for about a year."

"Go on into the tepee. Squaw in there'll tend to your rig. I'll rustle up some dough and berries and beaver tail for grub when you get through hibernatin'."

Busey did not bother to thank him; he would have done the same for Hank, and they both knew it. He stood up and moved toward the tepee, his body fuzzed with weariness.

Hank Miller slapped his thigh again. "Damn me," he said, looking toward Tom Royce's camp. "Damn me, this is gonna be a ring-tailed roarer."

The South Fork rendezvous was more than a means of supplying the men who trapped the high places for a living. It was a market, yes, but it was also a wild carnival, a fair, a chance to blow off steam. In the orange circles of light from the roaring fires men stamped and danced and hooted.

They drank the watered-down whisky and they wrestled and playfully gouged at each other's eyes.

It was a good time, a time to be remembered and savoured through all the lonely months to come. But through all the dancing and horseplay and general hell-raising, a shadow lay like a cloud over the rendezvous at the South Fork, a shadow of anticipation. By now the whole camp, white and red, knew that Busey Shafter had come in. They knew there was going to be a killing.

Tom Royce knew it, too. He sat by his small fire, apart from the others, more alone than Busey had ever been on the long walk from Deer Creek. No man had said a word to him since Busey had come in, the man Tom said he had buried high in the mountains. There was lots of room around him, a world full of room, but there was nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. Tom Royce sat alone and waited.

The tall, spectral figure of Busey Shafter stepped into the firelight, silent as a shadow. His dark eyes were squinted as though he faced a mountain wind. There was a knife in his belt and one of Hank Miller's pistols stuck in his waistband.

Tom Royce stood up, his hands in plain view. He was unarmed. Busey looked at him. Tom Royce was a medium man; neither tall nor short, chunky nor lean. His blue eyes were weak in his sun-bronzed face, as though a slippery inner man peered out through a mask of granite. He was, Busey thought, an almost man — almost strong enough, almost at home in the mountains, almost brave enough.

"Hallo, Tom," Busey said.

Tom Royce stood very still. "I ain't armed, Busey."

"I see that."

"Don't guess there's anything much I can say."

"Nothin' I want to listen to."

"I sold the beaver. You can have the money. All of it."

"I aim to have it."

Tom moved back a step, shrinking from the cold, sunken eyes. "Busey, I thought you was dead. I swear I thought you was dead."

"A man should make sure."

"Busey, I'll do anything. I'll make it up to you."

Busey laughed.

"Ain't you never been scared, Busey? Ain't you never had the feelin's of a ordinary man? Don't you know what it's like?"

"I been scared plenty, Tom. I been scared every night for a month." Busey stepped forward, his hand on his knife.

"What you gonna do, Busey? Busey, I ain't armed!"

Busey Shafter kept coming. He kept coming until he stood toe to toe with Tom Royce. He could smell the sweat of him, see the distended pupils of the faded blue eyes. He had seen that look before—the look of a beaver struggling on a trap chain, sinking, sinking.

"You sweat, Tom," he said. "You sweat, partner. You lie awake nights and sweat, wonderin' when it's comin'. You ain't no man for this country, Tom. I don't know what you are, but you ain't no man."

Tom Royce said nothing.

Busey didn't even hit him. He

How To Tell A Crease From A Wrinkle

The crease and the wrinkle, there isn't much doubt,
  Are alike in a number of ways,
But the crease is the one that so quickly comes out,
  While the wrinkle's the one that stays.

RICHARD ARMOUR

SHORT

Words Of Wisdom

"Is it sufficient if the good people in a village like a man?" Confucius was asked. "Such is not sufficient," he replied.

"Is it sufficient if the bad people like a man?"

"No," replied Confucius, "that is not sufficient."

"What is sufficient?" asked the questioner.

"It is sufficient," Confucius said, "if the good people in a village like a man, and the bad people *dis*like him."

This advice can be, at times, consoling to an actor wishing to explain away any bad criticisms.

CHARLES LAUGHTON

On The Beach

Mummy, isn't that the lady from our hotel?

Which lady?

The one with the bikini. Look, she's got it on again.

All right. Don't point.

Shall I let her know we're here?

No. And keep your voice down. Daddy's asleep.

Do you think her bikini's shrunk?

No. They make them like that.

It's much too short, isn't it?

That's the idea.

Do you wish you had one?

I doubt if Daddy would be too keen.

He's quite keen on that lady's, isn't he?

Is he?

Yes, don't you remember, he said what a magnificent creature she was, and you asked if he needed the binoculars, and he said——

Yes, yes, I remember. I'm trying to read.

Is it that book on bridge?

Yes.

Wasn't Daddy surprised at how well that lady could play?

Yes.

Will you be playing again tonight?

I don't know. Will you please keep quiet?

Mummy, I want to go in the sea.

Well go.

Daddy said not on my own. Will you come?

No. I'm reading.

Shall I wake Daddy then?

Yes, yes, if you want.

Good. Oh, look, that lady's going in, too. Daddy said he wouldn't miss that for anything. Do you remember, Mummy, when he said he wouldn't miss that for——

LIONEL DAVIDSON

Summing Up

. . . When the prisoner was searched, Members of the Jury, five different weapons, including a loaded revolver, were found upon him. His explanation, and you must weigh it carefully, was that while sitting in the pictures he felt his pocket being picked by the man in the seat next to him. Before he could make any complaint the man had gone and, to his horror, he found that instead of having lost anything he had, in fact, gained. The owner of the weapons had "planted" them upon him.

Furthermore, he was found in possession of a large sum of money. He did not, you will remember, suggest that this also had been "planted" on his person. His explanation was that a man had approached him in the street and said: "You will not remember me. Many years ago you did me a great kindness at a sacrifice to yourself. Thank you." Then he had handed him a number of notes and hurried away. In cross-examination, the prisoner said he did so many kindnesses that one might easily escape his memory.

I must now remind you of the prisoner's explanation of the fact that the police found precious stones sewn into his hatband. . . .

R. G. G. PRICE

Foreign Affairs

Complaints from the neighbours compelled Lewis Alberty, of Reedley, California, to send his two pet lions to the San Francisco Zoo. "He's going to miss taking the lions for a walk each day," sighed his wife Alicia. "It'll be better when he gets the two tigers he wants."

Starke's Holiday Guide Book

"The roads of the country leave much to be desired, but if you decide on a tour by hired car make sure that the driver is well versed in the lore of the area"

In Penang, newly married Teh Chew Ean left her husband and is suing him for maintenance because his mother made her get up to feed the pigs at 5 a.m —on her wedding night.

Leon White, twenty-two, walked into an Indianapolis hospital with a bullet wound in his hand. Asked how the accident happened, he casually replied: "The pistol went off while I was cleaning it to shoot my wife." He was charged with disorderly conduct.

The Long Haul

Gardening experts all remind us,
  We can make our lawns sublime:
And, perspiring, drag behind us,
  Rollers, long since past their prime!

NOEL A. JONES

turned his back to the man who had been his partner and walked away into the darkness, into the laughter and the singing and the hollering, toward Hank Miller's cheerful fire.

Tom Royce sank to the ground, staring into the shadows.

The days and nights marched in their eternal procession across the plain of the South Fork, sunlit days filled with trading and swapping and endless horse races, starlit nights ablaze with campfires and filled with the yarning of grizzled men and the liquid giggles of the Indian girls.

Busey Shafter and Tom Royce moved in never-touching orbits, but they were bound together as though by an invisible rope. They were tied together by bonds stronger than love, more fearful than hate.

BUSEY had never been a talkative man, but he walked with a smile on his lean face and a twinkle in his eyes. Tom Royce camped alone, a marked man, a man stamped for ever with the brand of cowardice. He drank too much and his blue eyes grew haunted and red-streaked. He never laughed and he slept with his pistol in his hand. The trappers watched without seeming to watch, waiting for the blow-up.

Busey was relaxed and light-hearted. He took the money he had got from Tom and outfitted himself handsomely. He lived high off the hog. He did not seek Tom Royce out. If they happened to pass, he smiled and said nothing.

"You better get that hoss," Hank Miller said one night, resting his back against a log. "He's gettin' a mite spooky."

Busey shook his head, fingered his smooth beard. "He ain't got the guts to shoot a man in the back and I ain't worried about the front. Let him stew."

The summer lengthened toward fall. Trappers began pulling out for their winter diggings, company men in groups of ten or twelve, free trappers in little knots of two and three men. The Indians faded away, going back for the autumn hunting before the long, bare winter set in.

Busey was getting restless. He began to fuss with his pack mule, getting him ready. "Let's pull out," he said, smoking his pipe one night. "This child's sat long enough."

Hank Miller looked at him, swallowed scalding coffee at a gulp. "I'm ready, Buse. We'll move on at sun-up. How about Tom? You goin' to let him off?"

Busey smiled. "You can't kill a dead man," he said.

• • •

The sun came over the mountains like a wind of gold, and Busey and Hank struck their tepee, saddled their horses and rode off. They climbed into the rocks and the pines and the thin, cold air. They were two men against a wilderness, but they didn't see it that way. They knew every bush and creek and bird and animal, every cloud and patch of mottled sunlight. The wind was in their faces and they were going home.

Busey chewed contentedly, the blood eager in his veins. "Trout for supper, Hank," he said.

Hank Miller smacked his lips. "Stop on Clear Creek?"

Busey nodded. He rode in silence for a while, feeling the country. "I didn't want to kill him, Hank," he said finally. "I wanted him to know how it was."

Hank shook his head. "Man like that has no business in the high places, Buse. Once a man loses his nerve he's a gone rabbit."

Busey looked at the hills unfolding before him. "No man'll have him for a partner now. Tom'll have to go it alone, wherever he goes. He'll be alone like I was alone. It'll either make a man of him or kill him. I don't much care which."

The incident was closed; neither of them ever referred to it again. . . .

Tom Royce rode alone up a dark mountain trail, his rifle ready in his hands. His hunted eyes moved restlessly in his head, peering at every tree, at every rustling in the brush. His lips were set in a thin, hard line.

The mountains pressed in around him, smothering him. The wind was cold and his belly was giving him trouble. Every dark spot was an Indian, every startled deer a menace that set his heart to jumping in his chest.

He rode alone and he had his own shadows at his side. Black and fearful shadows, shadows that crept around him like dark, dark night. Shadows. He gripped his rifle with sweaty, shaking hands.

He rode back to the mountains, back to the high places, and he never once looked behind him. THE END

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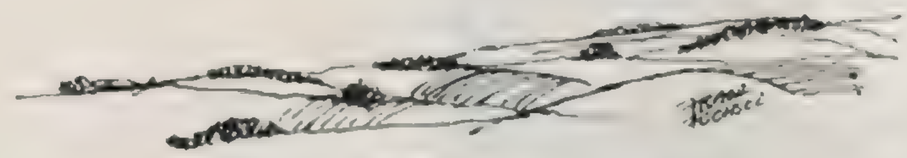

"I really MUST go now, darling"

Silver lining in your picnic hamper

Continued from page 14

trying to get hairdressers sold on the idea."

Another man whose wife insisted on keeping the radio full on while he read his paper sought Sawney's help, suggesting that he should apply the vacuum principle for sound insulation purposes. Sawney put a specialist on the job, turned out a pair of vacuum-lined earmuffs and sent the anti-radio man on his way.

Sawney and Bateson often help universities and scientific laboratories to make complicated equipment. For a pharmaceutical firm whose products had to be kept down to minus 65 degrees Centigrade, Bateson put one complete vacuum vessel inside another making, all told, four glass walls and two vacuum spaces, and packed dry ice around the lot.

He says: "Keeping cold things cold is much easier than keeping coffee hot. This is because a low interior temperature is nearer to the normal outside temperature than the boiling point of water. Once, in error, we forgot about some ice cubes we had left in a vacuum bowl. After seventeen days they were still hard."

The most interesting call for help Sawney ever had came from a wealthy British rancher in the Argentine who had peddled an idea across the United States without success. Used to travelling long distances in his car, the rancher wanted to find a way of making ice cubes for drinks inside a vacuum vessel.

The rancher suggested fitting a tiny compressor inside the base of the flask, connecting it to a car battery and placing the refrigerating coil in the small vacuum space. Sawney and Bateson got the country's best glass blowers working on the idea. Every single part of the vessel and the compressor was hand made, and it took months of work. Finally they were able to make ice inside the jar. "But," says Sawney, "I gave up for good when I realized that every such flask might cost as much as £20."

Sawney's ordinary pint flask has walls of soda lime glass only half a millimetre thick, and for the larger ones he uses silicate glass, similar to that used for ovenware, in thicknesses up to a millimetre and a half. "If we make the glass too thin," he says, "the customer will drop the flask and break it. If we make it too thick the thermal shock of the boiling water will break it just as surely."

He has had hundreds of complaints from people who said that the flasks broke when they put them "on the stove to warm up the tea." Some years ago large numbers of ice bowls were returned to him in pieces. He found that people were using ice picks to free the cubes, and eventually he remedied that by providing each bowl with a plastic lining.

Yet some vacuum vessels have survived rough treatment. Sawney treasures several which have been run over by tractors, and one which a soldier dropped from a fourth-floor window on to a parade-ground. "It all depends how it is dropped. If it falls on its base the chances are that it will survive; dropped on its side it will almost certainly collapse."

Using a principle discovered by Sir James Dewar in 1892, Sawney's firm puts one thin-walled glass bottle inside another, fuses the base of the larger one with gas burners, coats the inner walls with silver nitrate to prevent loss of heat, and pumps the air out of the space between the two bottles through a small nipple.

A yachtsman who survived a shipwreck off the Devon coast last summer told Sawney that as he was pacing the beach the next morning looking for possessions to salvage he came across his flask. Its outer casing was battered but it was still corked and the contents were warm. He said: "I just sat there on the beach and drank the tea the sea had brought in."

A tall, distinguished-looking man, who lives with his wife and three children in North London, Sawney drinks his own morning coffee out of vacuum flasks and when salmon fishing in Scotland he equips himself with large jars holding soups and even complete meals. Research in vacuum vessel cookery has shown that a dish almost cooked and placed in a heated jar will not only finish cooking in its own heat but keep up to eight hours.

Despite many requests from parents for a baby's vacuum bottle, Sawney refuses to market one because of risks to health. He explains: "People must not keep milk or milk products at intermediate temperature—from hot-tepid to tepid-cold—in which bacteria breed fastest of all. The same goes for fish, which needs air to remain free of decay."

Sawney rarely tires of talking about the versatility of his flasks. Possibly the oddest use to which one of them was ever put occurred during the war, when Sawney was asked by government authorities to insert a map of central Europe, printed on thin rice paper, between the two walls of some of his flasks. Reaching his office one morning he was greeted by an R.A.F. officer who said: "I probably owe my life to one of your flasks. I was shot down over Germany but my flask was saved. I drank the tea, broke the flask open, found the map and made my way to Switzerland. Here I am, and thanks very much." THE END

OPTIMISM—1

Optimism: waiting for a ship to come in when you haven't sent one out.

Dr. Louis L. Mann

The Rainbow and the Rose

by NEVIL SHUTE

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

Peggy had lived a lifetime with a fantastic secret . . . a secret that I was about to learn

IF the weather cleared by morning, I might save Johnnie Pascoe's life. He had crashed at the Lewis River, down the wild Tasmanian coast, on a mercy flight to bring out a sick child. . . .

Johnnie Pascoe was a retired airline pilot who owned a small airfield at Buxton, Tasmania. Before that he was with AusCan, and years ago he was an instructor at a flying club at Duffington, in the English Midlands. I'm Ronnie Clarke, an airline pilot too, and I've known Johnnie off and on most of my life. He taught me to fly at Duffington.

Twice already I'd tried to get young Dr. Turnbull to Lewis River in an Auster. Tomorrow I am going to try again, with Turnbull and this Sister Dawson who had just arrived in Buxton.

Meanwhile I had to get a good night's sleep. I went to bed in Johnnie Pascoe's house, surrounded by mementoes of his long flying life. He was much on my mind, and when I slept I began to dream about him, vividly. In the dream I *was* Johnnie Pascoe. I lived through his long-past R.F.C. days, his unhappy marriage to the musical comedy actress Judy Lester, through the time at Duffington when he was teaching Brenda Marshall to fly while he was falling in love with her. . . .

We couldn't marry, because Brenda was married already, even though her husband Derek was in The Haven, a mental institution, certified insane. . . .

Flying was Brenda's life. It helped her to carry the strain. But that strain grew much greater when our child, Brenda Margaret, was born.

It killed her. She couldn't go on. There came the terrible day when I found her last note to me—her farewell note—the day when I could only watch helplessly as she took her own life by diving her Moth into the ground. . . .

PART FIVE

The Girl In The Armchair

FOR the second time that night I woke from a bad dream. I was sweating and trembling, and for a time I didn't know where I was. I thought that I was in the small hotel where I had lived in New Delhi since leaving England, where I had woken up in that way practically every night. Brenda was dead, and now the baby was dead, the only part of Brenda that was left to me. I had killed her baby by neglect, for I had gone away to India and left her. Mine was the guilt, and my punishment was to go on living in loneliness and shame.

I stirred and reached out for the letter from Mrs. Duclos, Brenda's mother, telling me about the baby's death, to read it for the hundredth time, though I knew every word by heart. It wasn't there, and my torch wasn't there, either. There was something vertical and unfamiliar. As consciousness came back to me I realized my hand was on the standard of a table lamp. In my misery I fumbled about with a trembling hand until I found the switch and got it lit. . . .

I lay blinking in the flood of light. I was in

"There's something that I want to say to you, Peggy," I said. "I was wondering if you could ever bring yourself to think of marrying me"

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Johnnie Pascoe's room, and everything was quite all right. I hadn't just seen the girl I loved dive in. I wasn't in New Delhi. I hadn't killed her baby by neglect. It was a bad dream, a nightmare. I was Ronnie Clarke, and it was quite all right.

I lay there with the light on, gradually calming down. I was Ronnie Clarke, and my wife Sheila was waiting for me back at Essendon, and the children, Peter and Diana. It was all right.

Presently I got out of bed, put on Johnnie Pascoe's dressing-gown and bedroom slippers, and pulled the bedclothes up to the pillow to keep the bed warm. I felt in the pockets of the dressing-gown and found his packet of cigarettes and his box of matches. I put a cigarette into my mouth and took the matchbox from the other pocket. There was only one match left in it. I struck that with fingers that were still clumsy and trembling, and the head broke off short.

There was another box lying on a shelf in the sitting-room, that I had used to light the fire. I went through, and stood rooted in the doorway, sick with horror. The fire had been made up and was glowing red, but all the lights were out. And there, in the firelight, in the white boiler suit that she had worn the day she died, curled up in the armchair and asleep, was Brenda Marshall.

I SUPPOSE I made some exclamation, made some noise, because the girl in the armchair stirred and sat up. The white boiler suit melted away and resolved itself into a white dress. The short, curly, reddish-brown hair that I had expected wasn't there when she sat up into the firelight; this girl had darkish, wavy hair, shingled at the back. The face was different, too; vaguely familiar, but quite different. It wasn't Brenda Marshall at all, and I had been a fool.

She brushed the hair back from her face, and stood up. "I'm sorry," she said. "I must have dropped asleep. Are you Captain Clarke?"

I nodded. "You must be the nurse."

"I'm Sister Dawson," she replied. "Doctor Turnbull brought me down here and said it would be all right if I slept here. I hope we didn't wake you when we came in?"

I shook my head. "I never heard you. I thought you'd sleep in the other room."

She nodded. "I thought I'd get a better night if I slept in the chair here, by the fire. I hope you don't mind."

"*I* don't mind," I said. "I'm only sorry if I woke you up. I didn't know you were here. I just came in for a match." I reached out and took the box from the mantelpiece. "Will you have a cigarette?"

"Thanks." She glanced at her wrist watch. "Half past twelve," she said. "What time are we taking off?"

"If the weather's at all possible, I'd like to get into the air soon after six, and be down at the Lewis River at dawn," I said. "I set the alarm for five." I crossed to the window, and pulled the curtain aside. The wind was very strong, but the rain had stopped. "If it stays like this we shall be taking off soon after six. Did Doctor Turnbull explain about the trip to you?"

"Yes, sir."

I glanced at her. "You can't wear those clothes."

"He gave me a ski suit and ski boots." She indicated them in a corner. "I'll change into those for the flight. I've got a theatre gown with me."

They seemed to have got their side of it all buttoned up. "Okay," I said. "You'd better try and get a bit more sleep. I'm sorry I woke you up."

She hesitated, and then said: "I thought you were sleeping through, sir, and I'd have to wake you."

"I thought I would," I said. "But I woke up."

She frowned, evidently puzzled. "Doctor Turnbull told me that you were very tired, and you'd taken a Nembutal."

"I did," I told her. "But it didn't work."

She frowned again. "Do you take it very often?"

I shook my head. "I don't suppose I take more than three or four a year."

"I can't understand it," she said. "You should be sleeping like a log."

"I had a bad dream," I told her.

She nodded. "Would you go to sleep if you went back to bed again?"

"I'll be all right," I said.

She stood in thought. "I'd better get you something. I saw some milk in the kitchen. Would you take a cup of hot cocoa if I can find anything like that?"

"Don't bother."

She disregarded that, and went down the short corridor into the kitchen, very much the nurse. I heard cupboard doors opening and shutting. I threw some more wood on the fire and sat down before it. Presently she came back with a tray of two cups of the hot drink and a few biscuits on a plate.

"Doctor Turnbull said that you'd been an air hostess," I remarked. "With Captain Pascoe."

She nodded. "I was in his crew for

"He dabbled in photography before becoming a painter"

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by Celia Johnson

WHEN my husband was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire we kept up the tradition of inviting the judge to dinner during the county assizes. I can still remember the first time we entertained a judge at our home. It was one of the most nerve-racking experiences of my life.

I knew our guest to be a charming but rather exacting man, and I tried to ensure that dinner should be quiet and dignified.

The judge arrived at six. We had a drink and then sat down to dinner. I had spent a lot of time over the cooking, and the main dish was roast pork with wine sauce, garnished with apple rings, which our visitor praised. Indeed, everything was fine until I heard a scratching noise, noticed the door open an inch or two, and saw our pet squirrel.

Before I could capture him—how he escaped from his hut in the garden I never discovered—he ran up the curtains and sat on his favourite perch, the curtain pelmet.

We looked anxiously at the squirrel for a few moments, but he seemed quite happy. Often, in fact, he sat up there for hours. We carried on with the meal.

The squirrel waited until the judge was about to take his next mouthful of food, scurried down the curtains and with a nimble hop perched deftly on the judge's bald head.

I was too horrified to be amused at our guest's dilemma, although afterwards it gave us many laughs. The judge sat stupefied for a moment and then shook his head furiously. The frightened animal jumped on to the table, upset the judge's wine, hopped on to the judge's plate and then scurried from the room.

It took quite a time to restore order. The tablecloth had to be changed, the table reset, and our guest served again. It was kind of the judge to say, on leaving, that he thought squirrels were delightful animals.

What was even more comforting, he accepted an invitation for dinner with us—and our squirrel—on the following evening.

How to cook roast pork with wine sauce

Ingredients: 2 lb. loin of pork, ½ pint water, ½ pint white wine, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 4 bay leaves, seasoning, 1 oz. flour, ¼ bottle madeira wine, 1 lb. of apples, sliced and cooked.

Put the pork into a baking tin with the water, white wine, vinegar, bay leaves and seasoning. Bake in a moderate oven, basting occasionally, until tender (1¼-1½ hours). Cut the meat into slices and arrange in a warm dish. Keep hot.

For the sauce: heat the liquor the meat has cooked in, add madeira wine, and thicken with flour.

Mix well, and pour over meat. Serve with cooked apple slices.

about ten months, in AusCan. I'm back at the Queen Alexandra in Melbourne now—that's where I trained."

"You heard about this, and came over?"

"It was on the wireless," she said. "I thought I'd come over to see him in hospital. I never dreamed there'd be this difficulty in getting him out. I only heard about it when I got to Launceston."

"You're Australian, I suppose?" I asked.

She nodded. "I was brought up in South Yarra."

I finished my drink, and crossed to the window to look at the weather again. "It's getting finer all the time. Thank God for that." I turned back from the window. "I think I'll go back to bed now and see if I can get a bit more sleep."

"Sit down there for a minute while I make your bed," she said.

"Oh — that'll be all right," I objected.

She went to the door. "Sit down there. You'll sleep better if I make it."

Again she was very much the nurse, and I had no option but to obey her. I sat down again in the warm glow of the fire; in the next room I heard her slamming the pillows about, and the rustle of sheets and bedclothes.

She was an effective girl, I thought, and probably efficient at her job. Without a good surgical nurse at his side Dr. Turnbull might well have been fumbling and immature, but with this girl beside him as he operated, Johnnie Pascoe's chances were a great deal better.

The girl came back into the room. "All ready for you, sir," she said.

I got up and went into the bedroom, and she followed me. The bed was very white and clean and neat, just like a hospital bed, no wrinkle on the folded sheets or on the pillows. She took Johnnie Pascoe's dressing-gown as I slipped out of it and hung it up behind the door, folded his bedclothes over me and tucked them in professionally as I lay in his bed. Then she stood back. "All right now?"

"Quite all right," I said meekly.

She picked up his alarm clock. "I'll take this with me into the next room. Don't bother about waking up—just let yourself sleep through. I'll come and call you when it's time to get up."

She turned out the light and went out of his room, closing the door softly behind her.

I lay in the darkness, warm and very comfortable, drifting into sleep, and thinking about Johnnie Pascoe, whose pyjamas I was wearing, and about this nurse who had worked in the same aircrew for ten months in AusCan. The old Canadian senior pilot of the line, due for retirement before long, and the Australian nursing sister who had joined his crew as senior air hostess. Ten months together in a DC-6b, flying the Pacific route—Vancouver, Honolulu, Fiji and Sydney. . . .

FOR ten months I had lived in close association with this girl, on the flight deck over the great wastes of the Pacific, in the coconut groves and on the coral beaches of Fiji when we were resting, as we did for four days out of every week. I had come to know her very well indeed.

She came to me in the superintendent's office at Vancouver Airport, when I was getting a new crew together. She came in while I was talking to Dick Scott, my new flight engineer. "Miss Dawson, isn't it?" I said.

"Yes, sir. Peggy Dawson."

I shook hands with her. "I'm Captain Pascoe," I said. There was something vaguely familiar about her, and I decided that I must have seen her at Vancouver from time to time. And then I said: "Sit down, Miss Dawson. You've been flying Honolulu—San Francisco—Vancouver with Captain Forrest, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You aren't afraid of being based at Nandi? There's nothing much to do there."

"I don't mind Fiji," she said. "I'd rather like it for a time."

"I don't want anyone who's going to get fed up with it after a month or two." I told her. "If you come on the southern route you'd have to be prepared to stick it for a year."

"I know that," she said.

"And you're quite happy about it?"

"Yes, sir."

I nodded. "Well, if you come with me you'll get up-graded and get a bit more money. I'll be taking you as senior hostess. Think you can manage it?"

"I'm sure I can, sir."

"All right, you're in. This is Mr. Scott."

He raised his head. She smiled. "Mr. Scott and I know each other already."

She knew Pat Petersen, who was to be my first officer, so it looked as if I was getting a well-knit crew together. Two days later we took off for San Francisco and for Honolulu. We rested at the Beachcomber Hotel while the aircraft did another trip to Vancouver and came back to Honolulu, and then took it on with a full load of passengers for Nandi.

I had flown the southern route when AusCan opened it some years before; we had been flying early versions of the DC-6b in those days and had had to land at Canton Island to refuel. Now with the greater range of the new aircraft we could overfly Canton and go direct to Fiji, and the radio aids were very much better than they had been in those days. In the new machine we had two bunks on the flight deck so that we could get a little sleep when all was going well on a long flight.

I took off from Honolulu Airport soon after nine o'clock that evening, local time.

I stayed in my seat for an hour till we reached operating altitude and had adjusted for the cruise condition. The weather was clear ahead of us and everything was normal on the flight deck; I handed over to Pat and went aft into the cabin.

Everything seemed normal in the cabin. The passengers were finishing the light meal that we serve after an evening take-off; the girls had taken most of the trays away and were starting to hand out the pillows and the rugs. It was a busy period for them, and I wanted to see how they handled it. I walked to the rear of the cabin, stopping now and then to talk to somebody, looked into the toilets and the washrooms, and went back to the galley. I said to my senior hostess: "Everything all right here?"

"I think so, sir. We've got four sleeping berths to pull down. I'll do those in a minute."

I went back to my seat at the controls on the flight deck, wondering where I had seen her before.

I stayed on watch till two o'clock and then went back to the bunks that the others had used, to get some sleep. To my surprise the hostess was there. "I'm just giving you a fresh pillow, sir," she said.

"Service!" I laughed. "I've never had that done for me before."

She said seriously: "Would you like a cup of coffee now before you go to sleep?"

"I don't think so."

"What time will you be getting up?"

"We'll be coming up to Canton in a couple of hours. I expect I'll get up then."

She nodded. "I'll bring you a cup of coffee and a biscuit."

I took off my jacket, loosened my collar and tie, and lay down with my head on the clean pillow that she had provided for me, with a rug pulled over my body. As I lay composing myself for sleep, I wondered if this girl was going to be a nuisance. In thirty years of airline flying, the hostess who does everything for an unmarried captain and nothing for the passengers was no novelty to me, though it was some time since I had been plagued by one of them.

I smiled as I lay before sleep; I was probably flattering myself, for I was fifty-nine and due to retire next year.

THE trouble that I had anticipated with my senior hostess didn't develop. The cabin work went smoothly and well, and though I still got a clean pillow in the bunk when I lay down and still had my desire for a cup of coffee anticipated, I found that I was getting no more attention than the tourist passengers, which is as I wanted it to be.

She did her work and kept her place, and on the ground I didn't see a lot of her. It was not till we had been operating for about three weeks that I had any real conversation with her.

It was by the pool at the airport club at Nandi, where we were based. I had been in the pool, and had come out and dried myself standing in the sun. Most of the brightly coloured metal tables and chairs beneath the beach umbrellas were occupied, but she was sitting alone at one, reading a novel. I took my lighter and my pack of cigarettes and, towel in hand, I walked over to her. "Mind if I join you?"

She laid down her book. "Not a bit. I've been admiring your bathing shorts," she said.

I laughed. "They *are* a bit gaudy."

She laughed with me. "I think they're wonderful. Wherever did you buy them?"

"You can buy them at Honolulu," I said. "There's a place in Kalakaua Avenue just by the post office. Ten dollars. You can get women's costumes like them, too. I don't know how much they are."

"I wouldn't dare," she said. "I'm not sure that I know where Kalakaua Avenue is, anyway."

"The main street in Waikiki," I told her. "Half a mile or so from where we stay."

"I don't know Honolulu yet," she said. "I must explore it."

I offered her a cigarette and lit it for her. "Is this your first time away from Australia?"

She shook her head. "I went to England once, just after I qualified. I'd have liked to have stayed there and worked, but it wasn't possible."

"Why not?"

"My grandmother was getting very old," she said. "It wouldn't have been fair."

"Is she your only relation?"

"She was," she replied. "She died about two years ago, soon after I got back from England." She paused. "She brought me up. My mother and father were killed in a car crash."

"Too bad," I said. "Did that mean a lot to you?"

She shook her head. "I don't remember them at all."

"You live in Melbourne, I think you said?"

She nodded. "In South Yarra. All my friends are there; it's where I was brought up. Grandmother left me all her furniture, so I took a couple of

rooms in a friend's house as a sort of flat, and I've kept that on."

"That's a good idea," I said slowly. "You've always got somewhere to go back to, with your own things and people who know you."

She glanced at me curiously. "Where do you live?"

I laughed. "Where I work. Here."

"Haven't you got a flat anywhere?"

I shook my head. "But I'll be retiring in about a year, and then I'm going to have a house. A real house, for the first time in my life."

She smiled. "Where's that?"

"In Tasmania, I think. There's a little place called Buxton that I've got my eye on."

A FEW days later Charlie Lemaitre was a passenger with us from Honolulu southwards. Mr. Lemaitre had been Minister of Transport in Canada off and on for fifteen years, and I had known him off and on as long as that. He was on his way to Sydney for a conference, but he had brought his wife along with him and he intended to stay three or four days in Fiji on the way for a holiday.

Normally I never invite a passenger to the flight deck; AusCan forbid it and I think it's bad practice. It makes young captains and first officers swollen headed if they are allowed to bask in the admiration of really important people, and swollen heads bring accidents in their train.

Mr. Lemaitre was different because he had a pass from the head office, and I had him on the flight deck with me for over an hour after we took off, sitting in the second pilot's seat and chatting. He had been a pilot in the first World War, as I had myself.

When we got to Nandi I took time off to attend to Mr. and Mrs. Lemaitre myself for a few minutes; they were going on to Suva by Fiji Airways. Mrs. Lemaitre was absurdly grateful for the little things that I did for the minister as a matter of course. "So very kind of you, Captain Pascoe," she said. "Charlie will be giving a little dinner for some of the government people in the hotel on Monday night. Could you come down to Suva for that, and bring Miss Dawson with you?"

I thought quickly. This was in the nature of a royal command, and AusCan would probably want me to be there to show the flag. I could charge up the expenses.

"That's really very kind of you," I said. . . .

I had laid on tennis that afternoon at four o'clock; our crew of eight was just right for two courts. When we were walking off the courts towards our showers, I called Peggy Dawson over. "I've got a job for you," I said. "Mrs. Lemaitre wants us both to go down to a dinner party that she's giving in Suva on Monday."

She stared at me. "Wants me to go?"

"That's right. She asked me to go down and bring you, too. We'll be going down on Sunday."

She asked: "What sort of a party is it? It wouldn't be long dress?"

I hadn't really thought about it. "I suppose it will," I said. "The governor will probably be there."

"But I've got nothing to wear."

I smiled. "That's your problem. All I've contracted to do is to deliver you to the party. The company are paying your expenses."

• • •

At Suva we stayed with our manager, Stanley McEwen. His house was nearly a thousand feet up, and much cooler than the AusCan hostel at Nandi. We slept very well indeed, and I got up thinking of Tasmania. I dressed thinking of the little town of Buxton, with the virtually unused grass aerodrome. I had a week's leave coming to me in a month's time, and I thought I would go there and have another look at it.

Charlie Lemaitre's dinner party was quite a formal affair. It was still hot in Suva and they had it at a long table laid in one of the cloisters of the hotel, a very pleasant setting overlooking the gardens, the palm trees and a moonlit sea.

We men were in white dinner jackets and the women in evening dress; the table was lit by candles in glass shades, and there were many white-coated, soft-footed Indian waiters moving around behind us. The food was good and the wine passable, and the whole set-up was very, very pleasant.

Towards the end of dinner I happened to look down the table to where the air hostess was sitting talking to the Director of the Public Works Department, laughing at something he had said. Something in her attitude rang a bell, and everything clicked into place. I knew now why she had reminded me of someone when I saw her first. She was like Brenda Marshall.

It was only just a momentary flash, a movement of the hand or of the head that put the idea into my mind, and then it was gone. She was nothing like Brenda Marshall, really. She was quite different, in hair, face, figure—everything. She was Peggy Dawson, senior hostess in my aircrew. It must have been the wine, and I was tired, too; worried about Buxton, possibly, and loneliness. Loneliness and the wine; that added up to Brenda Marshall, and it always had done so, for twenty-seven years.

We went back to Nandi next morning, played a little tennis and took the machine on to Honolulu that evening. Our lives slipped back into the normal groove for several weeks. I took my leave and went to Buxton to have a look round. It wasn't a bad little town, with good trout streams not much fished within thirty miles or so.

I didn't want to stay in the hotel anyway, and there were several new houses going up, half-built. The aerodrome was a grass field of about five hundred acres that had been laid out for training in the last war and not much used since; it was grazed by sheep and the farmer had the one small hangar full of haymaking machinery and stuff of that sort. A bit of money wanted spending on it before it could be used for aeroplanes, but the shire clerk told me they would do that if I took it on a five years' lease.

There seemed to be some charter and instruction work offering, and several of the mountain graziers wanted superphosphate spread from the air because they couldn't get it on their rough back country any other way.

If I went there I should never make much more than a bare living but, on the other hand, I shouldn't have to work very hard.

I met most of the locals in the four days I was there and thought them a decent sort of a crowd. I told them who I was and just how I was fixed, and that I'd make my mind up within the next three or four months whether I wanted to lease the hangar and come there. But when I left to fly to Melbourne I had practically made up my mind.

A fortnight later, in Honolulu, I was standing on a corner one morning waiting to cross the road upon the lights to get a few cigars at the drug store, when Peggy Dawson came along, walking quickly. She stopped and I greeted her. "Too hot to walk like that," I said. "Where are you off to?"

"I was going back to the hotel," she said. "But now. . . ." She paused. "Could you let me have some dollars?"

"Why, certainly," I said. "How many do you want?"

"Could you let me have thirty?" she asked. "I'll give you the pounds back at the hotel. I want to get a dress."

I pulled out my wallet and gave her the money. "Nice dress?"

She took it, smiling. "It's a beaut. They're altering it for me; I'll collect it this afternoon."

"I tell you what," I said. "I'll go and get my cigars while you try it on. Then we'll go and have lunch somewhere and you can pick it up."

She smiled. "I'd like that. But I pay for my own lunch."

"Toss you for that one," I said, and went off for my cigars.

That lunch set a pattern of many others. We fell into a habit of strolling out together on our mornings in Honolulu after a late, lazy breakfast, to look at the yachts in the yacht harbour, or the sampan fishing boats, or the shops of down-town Honolulu or Waikiki. At Nandi in Fiji it was different and we didn't go about together; at the airport we seemed more or less on duty all the time; I was the captain and they treated me as one. But in Honolulu we could get lost in the crowd, away from our responsibilities with the airline.

Very soon, of course, I got wise to myself. I was a silly old fool, for I was coming very close to falling in love with a girl less than half my age, at a time of life when I should certainly have known better. I tried to take a grip upon myself but it wasn't easy.

October came, and towards the end of the month I went on a week's leave again. I went to Buxton and put up at the hotel. I had made up my mind. I got myself one of the two solicitors in the town and the shire clerk got the other and we set them to draw up a lease of the hangar and the flying rights upon the aerodrome, the latter based upon a very small percentage of my turnover. When that was all in train, I set myself to organize a house.

There were houses on the other side of the town available, but I wanted one upon the road that led to the aerodrome. I bought the last lot of a row of building sites, the one nearest to the hangar, and started my negotiations with the local builder. I wanted to buy three aeroplanes, tools, spares and a second-hand car; that meant that there wouldn't be a great deal of money left for a house. He had a book of designs of small weatherboard houses, and I picked one within my price bracket.

It had a large lounge, a kitchen, and two bedrooms, one small, the other not much bigger. Without admitting to myself why, I decided to cut the lounge down till it was quite small, and doubled the size of the main bedroom. The builder was confident that he could get it finished in the time.

Before I left, I wandered round the aerodrome with my camera snapping everything I could think of; the hangar, the site for my house, the view from where the house would be, the shopping street of the small town—everything. I knew that next week when I was in Honolulu I should want to tell Peggy Dawson all about it, and that with the views that I had taken and with the photographed plan of the house she should be able to get a very good idea how I was going to live.

I flew to Melbourne from Hobart and saw Arthur Schutt about the planes I wanted. I told him that I'd write to him with definite orders about Christmas time. After I had done with him I took a tram out to South Yarra, and walked around in the warm night, trying to visualize what Peggy Dawson's life had been among these quiet streets and houses. I found the house in which she had her flat, her *pied-à-terre*, and stood in the lamp-lit road looking at it from the outside for ten minutes. I was a silly old fool, of course, but I asked my way to the Queen Alexandra Hospital where she had worked, and went and had a look at the outside of that, too.

I SHOWED the snaps to her next week, sitting on the terrace of the hotel in Honolulu with our soft drinks. She was very interested, as I thought she would be, and examined each of them quite closely. I showed her the alterations I had made to the design of the house on the enlargement of the photographed plan.

"The kitchen's quite a decent size," she remarked. "And you've got a great big bedroom. But only one tiny little spare room."

"I'm not expecting visitors," I said. "Something had to be cut down."

I offered her a cigarette and lit it for her. "You've got it all worked out," she said presently. "You're going to get the sort of a retirement that will suit you best, I think. But I wish you weren't starting in quite such a new place. It's going to be lonely for you, just at first."

"I make friends fairly easily," I said. "As a matter of fact, I know some people in Melbourne, and I shall be going over there fairly often, I expect."

She glanced at me, surprised. "Who do you know in Melbourne—besides me?"

"A chap called Ronnie Clarke," I said. I went on to tell her about Ronnie, how I had taught him to fly back in England in the Dark Ages, how I had bumped up against him in the small world of aviation throughout my life. . . .

• • •

She went on leave soon after I got back, and when she was away I had time to think things over. She was right in saying that I should be lonely when I went to Buxton, but not the

"Of course, it's been unoccupied for some considerable time now"

OPTIMISM—2

The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; the pessimist fears this is true.

James Branch Cabell

way she meant. I should be lonely, very lonely indeed, but my loneliness would be for her.

In that week I faced up to what would happen if I asked her to marry me, with all its implications. I knew it was a silly thing to do at my age, and I knew that she would probably laugh it off, and there would be an end of the companionship that meant so much to me. Yet if I didn't do it, this companionship must come to an end anyway when I retired.

It would have been an easy decision to make but for one thing. I didn't particularly want her as a woman, and I had never made love to her. That was very serious indeed. If I married her, a woman in her middle twenties, she had a right to have a family, and I must marry her with that intention or else leave her alone.

The thought of bringing up an adolescent family when I was nearing the age of eighty and probably hard-up rocked me a bit, but it would be a new experience for me and one that I looked forward to in a way; new experiences keep one young.

By the end of the week I had come to the conclusion that I must try my luck.

We landed in from Honolulu one Friday morning just before Christmas. It had been a tiring and a troublesome flight through monsoon weather all the way from Canton. The Control kept us in the holding position for a quarter of an hour before they brought us in, and when we finally put down we had been in the air for nearly fifteen hours. The girls had had the worst of it, and they were looking white and strained.

I walked up to the hostel with my senior hostess. It was hot and steamy, but the frangipani was fragrant in the rain.

"Nice to be out in the fresh air, anyway," she said.

"Get a bit of sleep and then a swim," I replied. And then I said: "I tell you what. Would you like to stay down on the beach this evening if it's fine, and have a supper picnic?"

"Not everyone? Just us?"

"That's right," I said. "I'll get the cook to make us up a supper. Something cold and light. Crayfish salad and ice cream, and a bottle of hock."

She smiled. "That'd be marvellous."

It was very lovely on the beach that evening. The clouds had cleared away but for a storm down on the horizon, and the sun set in a clear sky. We sat on the white, coarse sand in our bathing things luxuriating in the coolness and the beauty of it all, enjoying the little whispers of warm wind about our bodies after the strain and effort of the night. I undid our supper and the bottle of chilled hock wrapped in a wet cloth, and we ate together in the fading light.

Presently I started in to say my piece. It would have been easier if I had ever held her in my arms, ever kissed her, but I had never done that.

"I'll be retiring in about a month from now," I said. "There's something that I wanted to say to you before then, but I don't know if you'll want to hear it."

"What's that, Johnnie?" she asked quietly.

"It was just a crazy idea I had," I told her. "We get on so well together that I'm going to miss you terribly when we have to break it up. I was wondering if you could ever bring yourself to think of marrying me."

She was silent.

I reached out and took her hand. "It's a May and December sort of a proposal, this," I said. "People will laugh at you if you accept it, because I'm an old man. But I do love you very truly, Peggy, and I think I could give you a very happy life. I would like you to think it over."

She sat motionless. At last she said: "How often do you do this, Johnnie? How often have you done it?"

"Twice," I said. "Only twice in my whole life."

She turned to me. "Was one of them Brenda Marshall?"

I stared at her, amazed. "Who told you about her?"

"Was it?" she asked gently.

Somebody must have told her, but I couldn't think who it could be. "Yes," I replied. "Brenda was the last one. But that was a long time ago."

"I know," she said. We sat silent together on the warm sand in the fading light. At last she said: "I've been playing a trick on you, Johnnie, and I'm feeling very badly about it. I want you to try and forgive me." She hesitated, and then said: "It's been wonderful to hear you say this. How wonderful, you just don't know. But I couldn't marry you."

"That's all right," I said a little thickly. "It was just a silly idea I had."

She turned to me. "It's not that, Johnnie. It's not that at all." She paused, and then she said: "You see, if everybody had their rights, my name would be Brenda Pascoe."

To be concluded next week

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TITANIC...
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Eight just men free the innocent

Continued from page 15

trial he saw several loopholes in the evidence, one being that a woman known to have seen the killer run along the street had not been asked in court to identify Boggie.

With Raymond Schindler, a New York private detective, he chartered a plane to Spokane. They found the missing woman witness and uncovered a startling story. She had not seen the attacker's face properly, but she had seen his profile and the colour of his skin and they were unlike Boggie's.

"I wasn't given a chance to say this at the trial," she explained. Further, she said that she had phoned the police some time after the murder to report that a man closely resembling the attacker was again prowling around the empty shack. The police, she said, told her to "forget it." They had pointed out they had already arrested a man—Boggie—for the murder, and the case was all but closed.

"When I insisted I had just seen the real murderer the cop hung up," she told the investigators.

Gardner and Schindler gleaned another surprising piece of information. Her twelve-year-old son, who had identified Boggie at the trial, later sobbed to her that he had done so only on the instructions of the deputy prosecutor.

This point could not be verified, however. The boy had since been killed in the war, while the deputy prosecutor had himself tangled with the law and was in a distant jail. The evidence of the "confession," they found, had come from an old enemy of Boggie. And a trip to Portland showed that Boggie's story of the overcoat was true: the aged store proprietor remembered the incident vividly because he resented Boggie's unethical intrusion into his bargaining.

Gardner's reports on the case attracted the attention of the Washington State legal authorities, who began their own inquiries. These public investigators agreed with the findings of Gardner and his associates and in December, 1948, Boggie was released. Shortly afterwards he married his childhood sweetheart.

Ironically, within a few months he had a heart seizure and died. But the case had brought a lot of publicity and praise for the "Court." Since then it has attained semi-official stature in most American states.

Apart from Gardner, Steeger and Schindler, the active members are Dr. Le Moyne Snyder, a lawyer and physician and an international authority on forensic medicine; Alex Gregory, a lie-detector expert; Park Street, chairman of the Texas Law Enforcement Foundation; Marshall Houts, a former F.B.I. agent, now a university law lecturer; and special investigator Lowall, a former Colorado crime reporter and news editor, and the only salaried member.

There has never been any shortage of cases. Coke and John Brite, two wild mountain brothers who were nearly lynched over killings which they didn't do, were cleared by an investigation. Louis Gross, a Jewish pedlar, was found to have been framed over a Michigan killing. Richard Roe, a mechanic, who thought it better not to call the police when he found his clandestine lover murdered, was shown to be innocent and released.

One plea took Court members into a desolate wasteland some fifty miles north of Palm Springs, California, where the only inhabitants were ugly joshua trees and a handful of tough characters scratching a living from gold in the desert.

One of them was a tall, wiry man, Bill Keys, who had drifted there fifty years earlier with his stout-hearted wife. He was a suspicious man and carried a rifle everywhere. He had it with him the morning he met Worth Bagley, a retired deputy sheriff who had settled in the area.

Like others, Keys had long used a road across what had now become Bagley's property. On May 11, 1943, however, he found a joshua tree log rolled across the rough path, and on it was a crudely lettered sign reading: "Keys, this is my last warning, stay off my property."

The rest of the story came from Keys: he looked around, saw Bagley crawling towards him, rifle in hand, and ran back to his car for his gun as Bagley fired the first shot. Keys returned the fire and Bagley started jumping around, trying to elude the

OPTIMISM—3

Optimism is the doctrine or belief that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly.

Ambrose Bierce

bullets. Two hit him, however, sending him sprawling to the ground.

To the hardened Keys, this was just another gun fight. He didn't even bother to inspect the fallen man. Instead he drove back to his property and went about his normal farm duties. These done, he went into town and surrendered to the marshals.

In court, the prosecution claimed that this was not a case of self-defence but cold-blooded murder, and produced medical experts who maintained that spattered blood showed that Bagley had been shot lying on the ground. Keys was convicted and sent to San Quentin. His ageing wife, alone on the farm, appealed to the Court of Last Resort.

Gardner was the principal investigator. He soon learned that Bagley had once consulted a psychiatrist because of sudden killing urges, and that during one spasm the ex-sheriff had even killed his own pet dog.

Dr. Le Moyne Snyder made detailed examinations of prosecution evidence concerning the way blood had spattered plants around Bagley. He also discovered that one of the bullets had severed the aorta, the body's main artery. This would affect blood pressure to such an extent that blood could not have reached nearby bushes if Bagley had been lying down all the time, he said.

These findings finally convinced the authorities of Keys's innocence and in due course he was released. After five wasted years he returned to his wife and run-down farm to start all over again. He is still there today, picking at the hard soil and building rough dams.

Keys had lost a sizeable slice of his life, though it was only a snippet compared with the lost years of some of the Court's other appellants. Vance Hardy was locked up for twenty-seven years before he was shown to be innocent. Nine of those years he spent in solitary confinement, seeing others only once a week when he was taken out for a shower.

He had been sentenced to life imprisonment at Detroit, having been identified by a bystander as one of the gunmen involved in a hold-up and shooting. Soon after being sent to jail he escaped. He was picked up three months later and put into a cell which had no window, no light and two planks for a bed. There he stayed for nine years.

"After that we were surprised to find him still sane," remarks Dr. Le Moyne Snyder, who first heard of Hardy through a prison doctor friend. He learned that Hardy's sister had received an affidavit from the bystander in 1945 stating that his positive identification of Hardy had not been all his own idea. But when she sought to use the affidavit to secure Hardy a new trial, the man refused to stand by it.

It did not take long to find out why. Interviewed, the man said that county officials had threatened to charge him with perjury if he changed his testimony.

He provided a further extraordinary explanation. The night before he took the witness stand, he said, he had been handcuffed and threatened by police. "They told me that I should go along with the identification of other witnesses," he said. "I didn't know I was the main witness. They treated me like a criminal." This was something that he had been too frightened to admit for twenty-six years.

The Court's legal men pointed out that the statute of limitations made a perjury charge impossible, and the man made a forthright statement. With this evidence, plus the results of Alex Gregory's lie detector tests on Hardy, the Court of Last Resort took its case to the state. Eventually a new trial was ordered and Hardy was released.

"Such a decision makes up for all the cases that disappoint us," comments the lean, white-haired Steeger.

And disappointments are many. Often police and government officials refuse to co-operate and so bring the Court's inquiries to stalemate.

One notable case in which inquiries were hampered by officials concerned a woman, Emma Jo Johnson, who left Honolulu in 1949 to seek a quick divorce in Las Vegas. While establishing the necessary six weeks' residence, she met Mickey Owens, whom she soon rejected because he was, she said, worthless and a loafer. Besides, she despised his foster mother, Jane Jones.

One afternoon after a drinking session, Emma Jo went to the Jones home. There was a heated argument, then a fight, during which Mrs. Jones collapsed. She was taken to hospital suffering from a brain injury and died some days later.

Emma Jo was arrested when an autopsy disclosed a brain haemorrhage. At her trial, Owens appeared as a prosecution witness and claimed that Emma Jo had struck his mother with a tin opener. A doctor told the court that such a weapon could have inflicted the damage. Emma Jo was sentenced to life imprisonment.

In 1953, when the Court of Last Resort looked into the case, Jane Jones's physiotherapist had an unexpected story. He had treated her within three hours of the brawl and she had told him about a blackout that she had experienced the day before. "She said that she'd fallen over backwards and had been unconscious for hours," he recalled. He added that even while he was attending her she began to pass out.

The case against Emma Jo weakened further when a private detective questioned a trial witness whom he located in Los Angeles. This man remembered that when friends accused Owens of framing his former lover, Owens had replied: "Someone had to be guilty. My mother had double indemnity insurance." The insurance company would have paid only face value on Mrs. Jones's policy if she had died from natural causes. Death from assault meant double payment to Owens.

When the Court produced their findings to the local law officers they encountered stubborn resistance. Attempts to question other witnesses were blocked. It took nearly two years to get the authorities to release Emma Jo Johnson.

Even worse than reluctance to correct official errors, the Court members feel, is the attitude of some police officials who consider that efficiency means someone in prison for every crime. "One of the worst examples of this," says Lowall, "was the case of Silas Rogers."

In 1943, at Petersburg, Virginia, two police officers spotted a car they believed to be stolen. After a lengthy, high-speed chase the car was forced off the road. The driver, a Negro wearing a white cap, ran into some bushes on a muddy river bank, chased by one of the policemen. The Negro fired two shots, one of which killed the officer, and escaped.

THE killing angered the public and local newspapers began a "catch the murderer" campaign. Silas Rogers, one of thousands of Negroes in the area, was picked up just outside town, wearing a white cap. He was held for a time without any reason being given and when public fury intensified was charged with the killing. His "confession" was read to newspapermen, and he was convicted and sentenced to death.

The sentence was, however, commuted to life imprisonment when a local newspaperman pointed out some glaring discrepancies in the testimony. The persistence of this reporter interested the Court of Last Resort.

Inquiries showed that Rogers could not drive a car and so could not have taken part in a high-speed race on tricky roads; that none of the fingerprints on the stolen car was his; and that he had been in a train at the time of the crime.

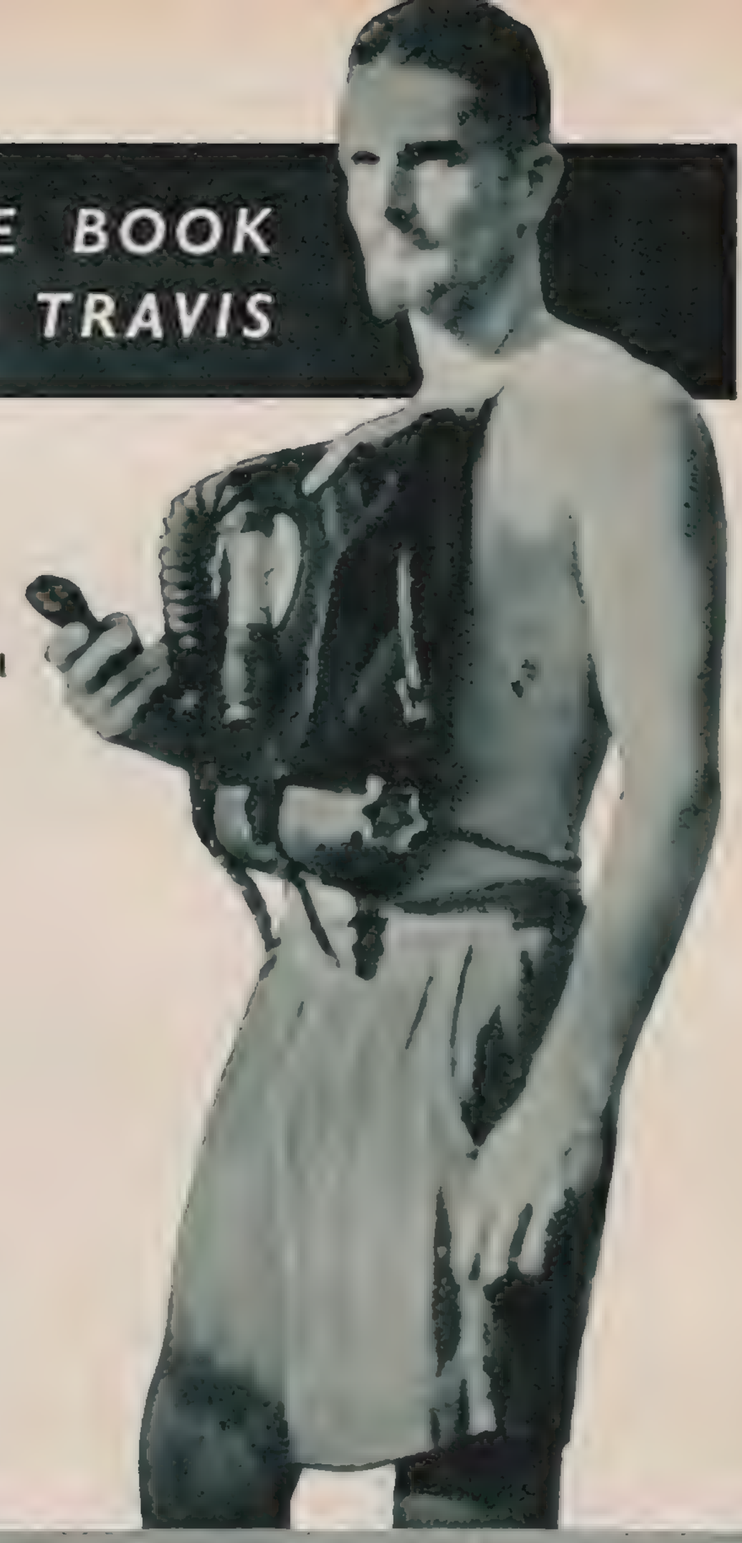
The State Governor, after making sure each point was cleared up, pardoned the still bewildered Rogers three days before Christmas, 1952—nine years after the wrongful arrest.

Sometimes Court members meet a case they wish they hadn't started. One centred on Theodore Roosevelt McClure, a likeable twenty-one year old Negro sentenced to die in the electric chair for shooting a man who had lent him money. The Court found a weakness in the prosecution's case: misleading testimony by a ballistics expert. Convinced that the gun McClure was said to have used was not the murder weapon, they secured a thirty-day reprieve.

But when he was given the lie detector test, McClure broke down and confessed that he had done the killing, though not with the gun produced in court. As he went to the chair, later, he told the warden: "You can't blame a guy for trying." This was a case where the right man had been convicted on the wrong evidence. THE END

"Anything I can do, dear?"

A JOHN BULL COMPLETE BOOK EXTRACT... BY WILLIAM TRAVIS



Travis was bored with his job as a commercial airline pilot. He lusted after excitement, and found it—in an island paradise

BEYOND THE REEFS

We dived deep among the coral of the exotic lagoons, with prospects of adventure and dreams of easy wealth . . .

Albert, a fourteen-year-old Seychellois, plucks a green snail from a ledge on the ocean floor. Once he fascinated a barracuda with his gleaming knife

OUR quest was for green snail, a valuable and beautiful type of sea-shell, and by November, 1956, we had arrived at Cosmoledo, a lonely atoll in the Indian Ocean some five hundred miles from the east coast of Africa.

There were twelve of us in this strange hunt; eleven natives from the Seychelles and myself. Three of the Seychellois each manned a dinghy on the surface. The rest of us swam on down the reef, close to coral in a hundred shades of purple, claret, violet and pink.

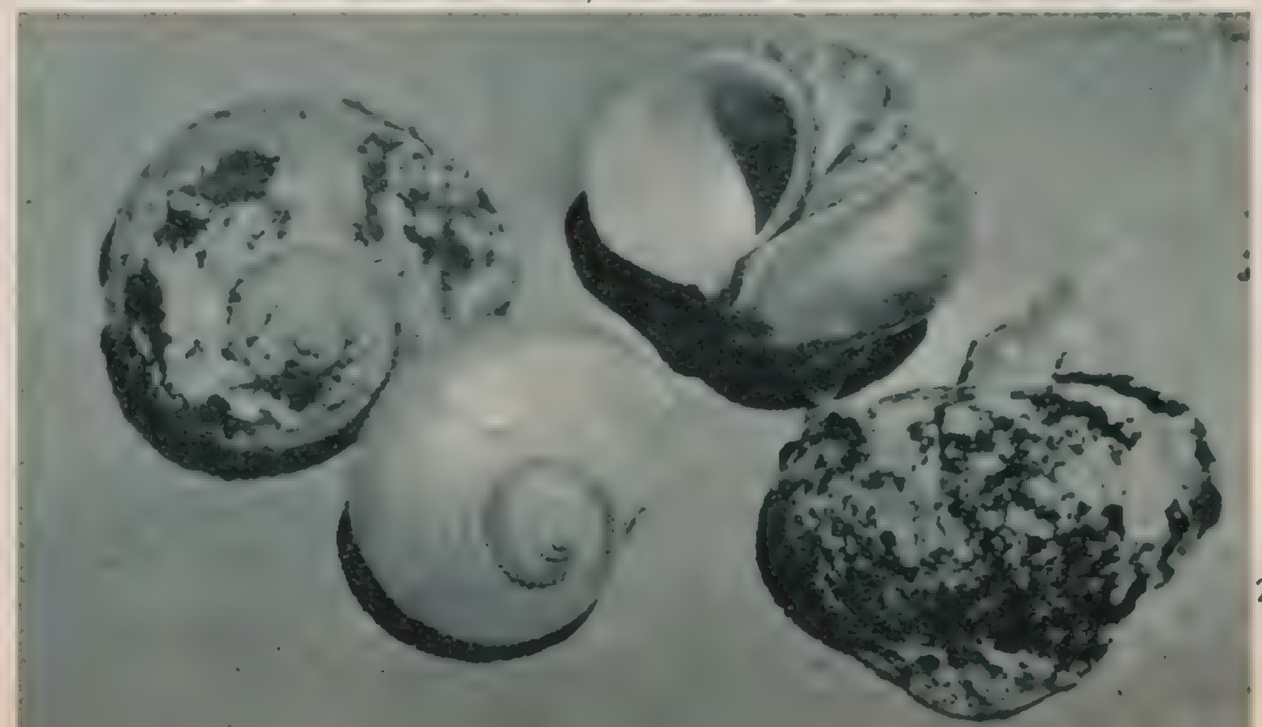
Before long, a black-tipped shark appeared. It was eight feet long. To test the others in the safety drill I had taught them, I stuck my head out of the water and yelled the French word for sharks: *"Requins! Requins!"*

Startled men popped up in the surrounding sea, looked at one another and swam towards me to form a tight group. The dinghies, too, closed in.

The last swimmer to arrive was a slim, nut-brown native whom we simply called Donald. He and Conrad, who had screwed-up eyes that peered out beneath a thatch of dark hair, shouldered their way up close behind me, visibly frightened.

Albert, however, was not in the least bit worried. Quick and sharp, and only fourteen years old, though with muscular development comparable to that of a European youth of seventeen, he knew from the brute's behaviour that it was merely being curious. Wanting to steal the limelight, he pulled out his knife and dived towards the shark. At this, the shark turned away and glided on downwards, keeping some yards ahead of him. His breath

Green snail shells, two of which have been cleaned to reveal the nacre underneath. For shells like these, one dealer offered Travis £240 a ton



I could see the island ahead; the brilliant ocean blue slashed with white as the waves

exhausted, Albert surfaced, the knife blade glistening in his hand.

But something else had seen that shining object. A large barracuda suddenly materialized and followed him stealthily. Barracudas, like jackdaws, love bright and glittering things.

With Albert on the surface, I explained to everyone how silly it was to threaten fish with anything shiny, since it only served to attract unwelcome attention. To demonstrate, I took the knife from Albert and dived down in the direction of the barracuda, which was still slowly circling us.

Getting within fifteen feet of it, I halted and worked my wrist to make the light play and ripple along the steel blade.

THE barracuda moved forward, intrigued. Another tremor of the knife, and on it came to within about five feet of my outstretched arm.

That was near enough, and I was just about to hide the weapon away out of sight of its bulgy, staring eyes when a flash of something large and silvery streaked past over my shoulder and hit my wrist with stunning force. At the same instant there was a metallic ringing sound, and the knife was torn from my hand and spun downwards into the green depths.

Before I had time to recover, the attacker had shot by, curved up over my head and swept on down again to survey me with a puzzled air.

It was a large, sixty-pound horse mackerel. The newcomer surveyed the torn skin along the inside of my wrist with contempt as though to say: "Well, my friend, if you *will* hold something that glistens like a tasty little fish, what do you expect?"

I sent Albert down to get his knife, which lay among the coral forty feet below us. I told myself that it was useful practice for him—and that it was his showing off which had started the whole business.

Anyway, what had happened had amounted to a very good object lesson; the others were suitably impressed. And I had a sprained wrist which served me as a painful memento of the incident for several weeks. . . .

The whole big adventure had begun in Zanzibar, East Africa.

Bored with my flying job in commercial aviation, I looked round desperately for a new career. The question was, what could I do?

The answer came from a friend, Harvey Brain, who was a schooner captain from the Seychelle Islands in the Indian Ocean. Knowing that skin-diving was a favourite sport of mine, he suggested a trip in search of green snail. These shells, which look like ordinary garden snail shells but grow to about nine inches in diameter, have green exteriors and insides of shining mother-of-pearl.

The snag was that they lie beyond the reefs, on the edge of the great ocean depths, where few people ever dive or swim, mainly on account of the sharks that patrol there. However, the more I thought about Harvey's idea, the more I liked it as something new and adventurous. And when a mother-of-pearl dealer in East Africa offered me £240 a ton I saw the commercial possibilities.

Soon everything was arranged. Harvey would supply a schooner for me, and we would share the expenses and profits, if any.

My eventual destination was an archipelago, some two hundred miles north-west of the northern tip of Madagascar, which included the islands of Cosmoledo and Aldabra and was said to be one of the best spots for green snail. First, though, I had to get together a team of local divers and train them to use compressed oxygen gear. This was necessary because I had been told that most of the shells were at depths beyond forty feet.

The schooner we used on our brief training trip around Mahé, the main island in the Seychelle group, was named the Marsouin. After a few days, we mastered the technique of diving down, picking up the shells and loading them into large net bags to be hauled to the surface.

Praslin, one of the islands near Mahé, is very lovely, particularly when viewed from the sea. Sailing along close under its granite headlands and steep wooded slopes, we saw it at its best.

A few terns flickered around us, and over and amongst the foliage of the upper slopes the white crescent shapes of others cut swift arcs. It was strange to see these sea birds, whose normal environment is bare rock or sandy island beaches, dashing in and out through the trees in this fashion.

Occasionally, the whole sea would quiver and ripple over a large area as a shoal of mackerel broke the surface, their mouths agape, scooping up the plankton that floated there.

Albert, who was among my first recruits, had a wonderful time. He managed to catch a baby hawksbill turtle, and attached a light transparent nylon line from its shell to his belt.

On being set free for the first time, the quaint little creature went off as fast as it could, all four flippers kicking furiously—only to be brought to a halt when it ran out of line. This invisible restraint it could not fathom, but after a while it stopped trying to stray farther from Albert than its leash allowed.

The pair of them presented an odd sight when out looking for shells, Albert swimming along the surface and, about ten feet below him and slightly in advance, having no visible connection, a baby turtle the size of a large soup plate.

When the boy dived, the hawksbill would crane its neck as far out of its shell as possible and follow him down. If Albert, on reaching the shell he was diving for, stayed there for more than a second or two, the turtle swam in small circles just over his head.

This state of affairs could not go on for ever, of course, and reluctantly I told him to let his pet go. We chose a place that was sheltered, free of any sharks that might eat the turtle.

It was then that we struck a difficulty. The baby turtle didn't *want* to go. On being liberated, it took up its normal position ten feet in advance of Albert and there it stayed. After about half an hour, Albert got back into the boat. This really upset the turtle, which paddled alongside, anxiously waiting to be picked up.

It took the whole of an afternoon to teach the reptile that Albert was no longer part of its life. We finally managed this by getting it to feed on some seaweed and then quietly stealing away. The first few times we did not get very far before being found out, and then there was a frantic rush to catch us up. Gradually, though, it allowed Albert to get farther and farther, and eventually we were able to creep away altogether without it paying any attention.

AFTER eleven days, we returned to Port Victoria in Mahé with nearly a ton of green snail and sold it for over £200—making more than £115 profit. This gave me an idea of future operating costs and provided a reserve fund. The next step was to find a schooner for the trip to Cosmoledo.

Eventually I came across what appeared to be a reasonable ship. Well built and fitted with a reliable engine, she was thirty feet long. Though originally named the Louis Alfred, a wharfside accident had removed most of the wooden plate on her stern, and all that was left was "lfred." Accordingly, she was now known as the L. Fred.

When the time came for us to leave Port Victoria in October, 1956, I had collected a team of twelve, including myself (in place of the L. Fred's normal complement of four), three dinghies, two huge oxygen cylinders, two tons of

The boat-house on Alphonse Island. Outside it stands Monsieur Gendron, the manager of the island, who acted as Travis's host

miscellaneous diving gear, three tons of provisions, twelve barrels of fuel, ten of water, and half a ton of salt.

The L. Fred could just about manage this, but there was no room left for shells. Therefore it was arranged for another schooner, the Argo, to accompany us down to Cosmoledo, carrying part of the stores. There she would wait for a few days and return to Mahé with any shells we might have gathered. One month later she would again go down and rendezvous with us to help us on our return trip.

We set out. It was my first trans-ocean voyage in command of any vessel, and in the circumstances I felt justified in diverting slightly from our direct route in order to call at Alphonse Island. This landfall, if successfully attained, would give the crew a little proof of my capabilities and give myself a check on the compass and my estimation of oceanic drift.

The first sight of Alphonse Island was one which I shall never forget. Right up to its encircling reef the brilliant blue of the deep ocean continued. There it was slashed with white as the breakers curved up and crashed down in a turmoil of foam.

Beyond that savage borderline lay a lake of translucent green water, the quiet lagoon, dappled with cloud shadows. On this surface Alphonse Island seemed to float, like a vessel in a sheltered anchorage.

Casuarina trees, with their delicate dark green plumes, bordered the narrow white-sand beach along the island's entire length. Behind these could be seen the stiff jagged fronds of tall coconut palms.

Encouraged by the fact that our arrival at the island had gone off according to plan, I decided to try to enter the lagoon through "Dead Man's Channel," the notoriously dangerous pass in the reef, without waiting for the pilotage of Monsieur Gendron, the manager of the island.

I put Ti-Royale, a tremendously strong, jet-black youth of eighteen, in charge of the engine and took over the wheel myself. As we turned towards the reef with its solid line of breakers, I looked around at the rest of the crew. The exuberance they had displayed on first sighting Alphonse had now changed to marked anxiety as they realized what I was going to attempt.

As the breakers drew close under the bow nobody spoke, and apart from the thumping of the engine and the noise of the surf all around us, we went through the pass in complete silence. Not until we halted momentarily to allow Gendron to come alongside and get on board was the spell broken.

They were a different bunch of men. Before, outside the reef, they had been just a collection of young boys, local fishermen and mature seamen. Now they were a crew, they had shared an experience together, and the sharing of it had knitted them into a team.

That evening, when we were talking on Gendron's veranda after dinner, the thud-thud of syncopated drumbeats came filtering through the palm trees, carried on the soft night breeze. "Have you ever seen a *moutia?*" asked my host. "Come along with me. I'll show you."

As we walked along the donkey-cropped grass track that led to the village, he explained: "The *moutia* was originally a Creole dance festival. It probably dates back to the tribal dance patterns of African slaves."

IT was easy to find out where the dance was being held. Not only had we the sound of the music to guide us but also the crackling flames of a brushwood bonfire, whose glow cast into deep relief the stark trunks of the palm trees beneath which we walked.

In my ignorance I had hoped for some excellent display of original Creole dancing. But the dozen couples circling the fire shuffled lethargically in a lifeless parody of semi-European dance technique without, however, actually holding each other. Even the musicians appeared doped, their faces sweat-rinsed and expressionless.

The only thing that lived in the clearing was the crackling fire, its leaping flames sending showers of sparks swirling up into the palm fronds, dark against the moonless night. Occasionally a woman would break from her partner and execute a few wobbly steps on her own, throwing back her head and letting out strident cries as she did so. While she did so her man remained frozen in the spot where she had left him, his body slack and unresponsive to the music's beat.

The scene was heavy, with a dull, animal intensity. There was no laughter, no soft gigglings—only the dull thud-thud of the drums, the squeak of

crashed in a turmoil of foam . . . and beyond, dappled with shadow, the quiet lagoon

The shells have to be cleaned of flesh before they can be sold. In the atoll of Cosmoledo, Travis's ship collected a ton within a week

an ill-tuned fiddle and the occasional mournful cries of the women.

On the way back to his house Gendron told me more about the *moutia*. Many years ago this entertainment had reached a stage comparable with the calypso of the West Indies. Near the drummer would stand the male "lead," who would start chanting in a high falsetto voice, relating any triviality that might occur to him. Opposite, facing the band and the fire, would be his female counterpart, who would cap each line either with a question or by continuing the theme. So it would go on, the improvisation tossed from one to another, with the crowd joining in the chorus.

Apparently the degree of satirical verse never approached the same standard as the modern calypso, but even so, the whole institution must have been far more interesting than the present-day debased *moutia* we had just seen.

Nobody knew why the genuine form had died out. It was like many of the real arts and crafts of these unhappy islands; they are all on the wane. The lace-making, raffia work, embroidery, the *cantolet*—a dance derived from European ballroom dancing—all these have disappeared. It is sad and typical of the Seychelles, the whole tempo of which reminds me of a clockwork mechanism that is badly in need of winding up and threatens to stop altogether.

When we left through "Dead Man's Channel" the next morning, the islanders of Alphonse had piled our deck high with crates of chickens and baskets of vegetables and fruit. Running loose among these was a pair of squealing piglets. One we slaughtered the second day out, but the other, which we named Alice, we resolved to keep as live "emergency rations."

The atoll of Cosmoledo stands in a quiet lagoon ten miles wide. As we worked along the reef, I led the way to the scattered, half-disappeared wreckage of a guano-carrying ship, the Meadea.

Ti-Royale found a heap of anchor chain, a great rusted pile with green snail clustered on it. Albert hit on a boiler, from the dark interior of which he pulled out more than fifty shells. Each of us made his own little discovery and set about exploiting it.

I and a diver named Teddy made a discovery of another sort. Coming upon a slab of rusting ironwork, I was surprised to see a huge rock cod leave its shadows and head directly for us. That these oafish fish were curious I knew full well, but was totally unprepared for this one's subsequent actions.

Teddy had just dived to retrieve a solitary shell that lay under a coral bush. The cod, seeing this strange being hanging there, holding on to the coral with one hand, legs beating slowly to keep itself in position and head downwards on the sea bed, swam right up, circled the unsuspecting diver and then deliberately, from a range of about three yards, took a short run and butted him hard in the back.

That it was hard I could see by the string of bubbles that soared upwards from Teddy's snorkel as, the breath knocked out of him, he was bowled over by the attack.

Bewildered as to what had happened, he struggled to the surface while the cod hid himself in a gully.

When Teddy had got his breath back I pointed out the fish to him and then dived to see if the grouper would do the same to me.

It did, and I was sorry I ever thought of tempting it. Hardly had I reached the bottom, and even before my back was turned—*wham*—I was flying violently head over heels, losing all my breath.

When I re-surfaced, Teddy had almost sunk through laughing, but the humour of the situation was completely lost on me.

By playing a game of tag with that crusty old gentleman we soon discovered that firstly, he would only butt when we were not looking, and would courteously withdraw when approached directly; secondly, if we pressed on right into his home, violating his domain and the laws of property, he would give up in disgust and sulk or retire, outraged at this behaviour which obviously broke all the rules of the game.

Having completely shattered the cod by refusing to be intimidated, we added injury to insult by robbing his home of several dozen choice shells which we found within it. Thus avenged, we went on.

We scoured the northern reefs encircling the lagoon and by the end of the first week had over a ton of shells to show for our labours.

Sunday was a rest day. I went off alone. Having watched all week the boobies and frigate birds that had their nests on the islet in front of our anchorage, I wanted to see them at close quarters.

Ashore on the islet, the old pungent island smell that I liked so much assailed me and I felt the warm earth under my bare feet.

I had read that the frigate bird is a relative of the pelican, but to me it always looks far more like a type of oceanic kite. It leads a glorious life, and is aptly named. All it does is to lie in wait aloft until it spies a gorged booby homeward bound. Then down it sweeps and chases, bullies and chastises the poor booby until the latter, in disgust, obligingly disgorges its flying-fish lunch, which the frigate then pounces on.

It is only due to the fact that the boobies far outnumber the frigates that baby boobies ever get fed at all. After a while, the frigates become full of booby flying-fish and let the parents fly in to their nests in peace.

The frigate chicks were particularly interesting. The new-born ones were as snow white and powder puff-like as the baby boobies, and only distinguishable from them by the vicious little hooks on the ends of their beaks and the lack of webbing on their feet. Some of these chicks were perched in the most precarious places and it was difficult to see how the eggs from which they had come had ever balanced on the bare and slippery branches on which they crouched.

Elsewhere on the islet, other birds had their homes. Snowy egrets stalked about, their heads hunched down on their shoulders, looking like little old men marching up and down with hands clasped behind their backs, engaged in serious contemplation.

On the rocks at the water's edge oyster-catchers stood in small groups, their black and white livery out of place in the general colour scheme of green, brown and blues.

Far out in the lagoon shallows stood great tall creatures whose upright figures I first took to be those of men, but which turned out to be goliath herons, hunting for crabs and small reef eels.

It was a day or two later, off the reef at Cosmoledo, that I was swimming with Ti-Royale and suddenly, towards us from dead ahead, came a turtle going all out, flippers thrashing madly. It shot between us and disappeared in a flash.

Before we could recover from our astonishment, an enormous grey bulk loomed up in its wake. I had a glimpse of a head as broad across as a fair-sized table, three huge fins and a vast body. I tried to pull to one side but was far too slow. I felt a tremendous buffet across my knees and something hit my head like a thunderclap, shattering the glass of my face-mask.

By the time I had groped my way to the surface the shark had vanished. According to Ti-Royale, who had pulled a little to one side following the turtle's passing and had thus avoided a similar collision, the shark had been about fourteen feet in length. Ti-Royale had seen my legs hit the brute just below its mouth, which fortunately had been shut. The blow on my head, he thought, had probably been caused by a side-flip from the shark's tail.

After this incident, by mutual and silent consent we turned back and rejoined the other divers on board the L. Fred.

The next morning I set off alone in a dinghy to have a last look at where Ti-Royale and I had been the previous day to make sure that we had not missed any worthwhile green snail colonies.

To do this, I motored up and down, pausing now and then to examine the reef below the surface by means of a glass-bottomed box. Nothing was there, though, and after an hour or so I turned back.

It was pleasant cruising towards the L. Fred. In order that I might study the reef more closely, and yet be in a position to avoid any coral-heads, I stood right up in the bows, steering by means of a turtle spear lashed to the tiller of the outboard motor.

Cruising along, idly watching the reef unfold beneath the dinghy, I was thrown completely off my balance when, without any warning whatsoever, there was a terrific jolt and the dinghy stopped dead.

Picking myself up from off the floor boards I turned around to see the motor canted right up on its hinged mounting, propeller in the air.

My first thought was that I had struck a hidden coral-head, but that was absurd for I was in relatively deep water and would have seen any such mass from my position in the bows.

Puzzled, I examined the motor. It seemed all right and, having lowered the propeller into the water again, I let in the clutch and opened up the throttle.

Hardly had I done so, and the boat was barely moving forward again, when there was a swirl in the water just astern and a second later a tail, a great glistening back and an enormous dorsal fin broke the surface.

I gazed at this apparition in astonishment and then my hair stood on end. From out of the water rose the most devilish-looking head I had ever seen.

A good yard across, wedge-shaped with fixed and staring eyes as big as golf balls, it reared up to display a mouth that seemed to be full of three-inch spikes.

With a sickening chopping sound the head sank back again as the jaws were snapped shut. The motor jumped right up from its mounting and fell forward, pushing me down once more on the floor boards.

The hammerhead shark—for that was what it was—had gone, and I never saw it again. Judging from the number of teeth it left splintered around the propeller boss and shaft, it must have had even more of a shock than I did.

Back on the L. Fred, having rowed the rest of the way, my story did not arouse much comment. Apparently it was no unusual occurrence in the Seychelles for hammerheads to strike at the propellers of small craft, presumably being attracted by the bright, whirling blades.

What with our encounter of the previous day and now this incident, I judged it was high time we left Cosmoledo, and as soon as the dinghies were loaded, we up-anchored, sailed out of the lagoon and set course to the west. . . .

Unlike Cosmoledo, the atoll-ring of which only partly succeeds in breaking the surface, Aldabra is a very substantial affair, some twenty-one miles in length. Although technically an atoll, it has the external appearance of an island, for the land rim is well-nigh perfect with only a few narrow channels through which the sea may enter the land-locked lagoon.

We found on the reef the slime-covered sunken wreck of an 11,000-ton ship named the Glen Lyon. Green snail were ranged in lines along each metal cornice and clustered within every dark opening.

It took us three days to clear out the wreck, by which time we had put on board over two tons of shells.

The Seychelles are one of the only two places in the world where the giant tortoise is found; the other is the Galapagos group, off the west coast of South America.

Giant tortoises present something of an evolutionary problem. They are relics of a long past age, about the only living "prehistoric" animals left. But the age of Aldabra itself has been geologically determined as not more

than 3,500 years. If so, why are all the tortoises on the island? Where did they come from?

One theory is that these creatures originally inhabited the supposedly sunken continent of Lemuria, which may or may not have joined southern India with Madagascar. On the arrival of the catastrophe that removed the land mass, these giant tortoises, secure in their armour plate, survived the fury and floated until some of them were carried in by waves and currents to the beaches of Aldabra.

I wanted to test one vital facet of that theory, and to do it I had to capture a tortoise.

I had not far to look. Clambering over the eroded rock cliff that surrounds the island I came to a herd of giant tortoises peacefully grazing away in a hollow.

That the tortoises would be big I had known, but I was totally unprepared to see just how big. There was an old grandfather more than five feet long and the arch of his back reached nearly table height.

I crept up to the herd very carefully, expecting the usual tortoise reaction of withdrawing into shells. But not a bit of it. One or two looked up and regarded me steadily and tolerantly. Walking right among the group produced no result at all. I might as well not have been there. They saw me, looked through me, ignored me.

I sat down on one tortoise and it simply marched off in high dudgeon, carrying me along with it. Rapping on the shell produced no other response than a turning of the long reptilian neck and a cold unblinking stare. I shouted at it. No reaction whatsoever.

The truth of these untortoise-like actions is that the Aldabra tortoises have nothing to fear; no enemies exist for them.

Kidnapping a small one temporarily, I waded out to waist-depth in the lagoon with it and gently put it into the sea. With all its weight I was confident that the tortoise would sink and thus destroy the cornerstone of the theory that its ancestors had floated to Aldabra.

But lo and behold—it floated. In fact, it barely drew any water at all, only the soft under-carapace resting lightly upon the surface, leaving the head and neck completely clear.

After five minutes, thinking the point well enough proven, I took the tortoise back to the beach. One last thing remained. I plucked some green seaweed from off the bottom of the lagoon and proffered it. The little tortoise examined it coldly and then gravely took and ate it all. This indicated that it might have been possible for its ancestors to have fed on drifting seaweed if afloat for a very long time.

Before returning to the spot from which I had taken the tortoise I gave it a thorough bath to clean the sand from its creases and folds. Afterwards I brushed out the salt crystals with a switch of grass in case they might cause irritation.

I left my reptilian guinea-pig where I had found it, but now it was stoically lapping up a bird's egg which I had found and which I had broken by the simple expedient of cracking it on its horny nose.

The other tortoises were all in the exact positions in which I had left them earlier. The biggest one still had half a blade of grass protruding from its mouth. At what point in the past it had ceased eating I did not know, nor when in the future it would carry on again.

I had an eerie feeling that this sunlit clearing was somewhere out of time, that here the sun would never sink and that if I stayed for one short hour I would return, like Rip Van Winkle, to find the L. Fred long since rotted to dust and my crew already dead and forgotten.

A heavy silence permeated the air and not even the weird lost cries of strange birds away in the thickets seemed real. No breeze stirred the grass.

Shivering a little in spite of the sun, I got to my feet and left that haunted

"Which do you try to grow, sir—fruit, vegetables or flowers?"

clearing, tip-toeing away in order that my unwanted presence might not be noticed.

Mid-December came in squally and vicious. For one whole week we dodged from anchorage to anchorage in our efforts to avoid being driven up on to the reef by the constantly changing wind.

It was a miserable period. The whole schooner, and we as well, stank of mould, of sodden dirty clothing, diesel oil and musty provisions. Under such conditions our morale soon dropped to zero and by the sixth day I knew that some diversion must be found.

Looking out across at Aldabra I was surprised to see the whole sky-line along the top of the jagged coral cliffs alive with movement. For a while I could not make out what was causing this until a momentary lifting of the rain allowed me to see that the cliff edge was a solid mass of great shaggy goats.

What about a goat hunt as a diversion?

The crew reacted to my suggestion

OPTIMISM—4

Pessimism, when you get used to it, is just as agreeable as optimism.

Arnold Bennett

with whoops of joy and we went ashore. Arriving under the overhanging cliffs we crept along until we were beneath where a group of animals stood. We knew we were beneath them by the smell. It was the strongest, rankest, goatiest smell I had ever come across in my life. It was awful.

We climbed up as stealthily as possible, but need not have troubled. As we heaved ourselves up over the top we were met by an unnerving sight. Towering above us, his forefeet right on the cliff edge, was the biggest billy-goat possible to imagine. He was almost as big as a donkey.

We did not argue with him, but retreated. So it was every time we sought to get up from the beach; we were forced back at hornpoint by some hoary patriarch.

Eventually Donald found an unguarded gully and we managed to gain the terraced cliff-top. By now, all thoughts of lassoing or carrying off any of these animals had left our minds. They were far too big.

For more than an hour we tried to separate one of the kids from the flock and eventually Donald was successful in grabbing hold of it. But he did not retain his prize for long. At the youngster's first surprised bleat, its mother shot forward, closely followed by the nearest patriarch. One look at the angry pair and Donald dropped the kid and leaped for his life over the cliff into the shallow water below.

The rest of us did not have much time to laugh, for having disposed of one tormentor so easily the ram then charged and scattered the rest of us like chaff. That was the end of the hunt, and clambering back into the dinghies we returned to the L. Fred.

The weather cleared and the south and south-western sides of Aldabra yielded us five tons of shells in five days. We saw many sharks, but chiefly small ones. As regards the other marine inhabitants, only the groupers gave us any trouble. And what trouble! We soon found out that at set intervals the walls of coral formed huge deep chambers. Each chamber was the domain of a particular grouper, who ruled his territory like a benevolent but despotic ogre.

None of these fish was very big, being for the most part between fifty and sixty pounds in weight, and about four or five feet in length. All were exactly alike—fat, bulbous, frog-eyed and ugly.

I first met one on the second day's diving. I had left the surface and was sinking on down with arms outstretched when I noticed a grouper gazing up at me from below.

Once on the bottom I forgot all about the fish and started looking for shells. Scarcely had I picked up the first and was about to put it in the net when something touched my shoulder. Peering over my shoulder, its gill-case touching my mask, was the long and lugubrious face of the grouper. My hand, in the act of placing the shell in the net, halted and I did not move, waiting for something to happen.

After a few seconds a large globular eye rolled sideways until it was looking into mine. The implication was obvious: "Go on, then. Don't mind me. I'm only looking." Gingerly I opened my gloved fingers, allowing the shell to sink into the net.

From then on, wherever I went the grouper came too. If I scratched under a ledge, he thrust his big ugly head under so that I had to push him aside. Twice he tried to get in the net-bag. Once I nearly sat on him.

If I scratched his side the fish rolled his eyes and turned over on his side like a dog. When I stopped scratching he remained in ecstasy for a few seconds before rousing himself with a shake and moving off a few yards with an embarrassed air.

Those five days passed with a strange, dream-like tranquillity. Then once again the weather changed and we were constantly soaked by driving rain squalls. Christmas Day, however, broke fine and clear. A foolhardy turtle surfaced near us, and that was Christmas lunch taken care of.

While lunch was being made ready, I rowed off in one of the dinghies. I needed a change and wanted to lie on the bottom in some coral grotto, to watch fish and light and shade, to listen to the soundlessness, to relax and be able to enjoy the sea again for a short while. Ti-Royale asked if he might come and I agreed, but only on the condition that he did the rowing.

Soon we found what looked like a suitable place and dropped over the side. The area we had chosen was a white-sand amphitheatre set amid encircling coral.

Our arrival on the sea-floor sent up puffs of fine sand, which immediately attracted the attention of some surgeon fish that had been cruising around in the upper levels. These now swarmed about our heads, passing beneath our arms and round our legs. Ti-Royale pulled a bi-valve off a nearby chunk of coral, opened it and cut up the mollusc within into tiny shreds and gave it to them. He fed the surgeon fish as one might feed pigeons, placing bits upon his open palm for them.

A few bigger fish came up to see what was going on. A young shark dropped down over the coral cliff face and stayed a while, hanging around our ankles, terrier fashion. To him also Ti-Royale offered shell fish and he snapped up the fragments eagerly.

Later, five large rays glided down, obviously pleased to have found a soft, flat area in which to park. Ti-Royale set about teasing them, catching hold of the tips of their tails and tugging them gently until they took to flight, whereupon he would let go and they would gratefully settle down again, only to have the process repeated as soon as they were at rest.

Eventually, exasperated at being disturbed, one of the rays rose and beat gently round the sandy arena in a steadily banked turn. The others followed. Round and round they went, Ti-Royale joining in. This strange ritual went on for several minutes. Then suddenly the rays took fright and the procession broke up with a flurry of wings. And Ti-Royale and I were left sole tenants of the place.

As soon as the Argo arrived to help us back home, I read the mail her captain had brought. The chief item in this was that green snail now stood at £450 per ton.

With more than eight tons stowed below in the L. Fred, the expedition looked like being highly successful.

When we arrived at Port Victoria a first firm order for seven and a half tons of shells came in right away.

Confidently I started to plan a similar but improved expedition for the following autumn. Among the innovations were to be motorized underwater sledges for research work, specially built diving dinghies and power-hoists on board the parent ship.

It looked like being a busy summer. But these hopes were not realized.

The shell merchant got our shells all right, but we never got his money. Then the United States synthetics industry succeeded in producing an imitation mother-of-pearl that was said to be undetectable from the real article, easier to work, of greater durability and costing a fraction of the price of the natural article. By late summer the market value of our shells had dropped to around £100 per ton—if one was lucky enough to find a buyer.

My friend Harvey had the last word on the subject. Accompanied by a team of skin-divers I had managed to train for him, he went out shelling and returned in June. Of green snails he found not a trace. He managed to make good most of his expenses by catching twelve tons of shark, which he salted and dried and brought back to Mahé to sell.

After talking over the results of our respective voyages he summed them up thus: "All I can say is, thank goodness I didn't strike green snail like you did, or I'd have been a financial wreck by now."

He had something there. THE END

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William Travis's story is an extract from his book, "Beyond The Reefs," to be published by Allen & Unwin Ltd., price 21s.

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4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated September 6), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, August 23 for early news of No. 2,153 result.)

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